



Waiting for the old Mark Anthony

Birthday homage to Manansala



2 Germans die in plane crash in Puerto Galera

Gov't eyes higher corporate income tax

Pacquiao immortalized in boxing video game



Chavit sees vindication in warning on Erap trip



By Volt Contreras and Christian V. Esguerra

THE MAN who cried "Erap will escape" insists his warning has served its purpose.

CHAVIT/A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Opposition committee of 5 includes Erap

By Carlito Pablo

IN WHAT appeared to be a "shadow government in waiting," a committee of five, including deposed President Joseph Estrada, has been constituted to lead the opposition against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The other members are House Minority

OPPOSITION/A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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P18

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Ati-atihan turns bloody

Kidnapped German, boyfriend rescued

By Christian V. Esguerra and Nancy C. Carvajal

A BAND of robbers' first venture into kidnapping, nourished by dreams of P30 million, lasted just six days.

Their caper ended before dawn yesterday when police stormed their hideouts, collared all of them and rescued their victims—a German woman and her Filipino boyfriend.

All 10 suspects were arrested while Katrina Schoof, 20, and Jeffrey Cruz, 26, were recovered unharmed by the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer) team, officials said.

One of the suspects was a member of the Special Action Force, PO1 Alvin Velasquez, who had been absent without

KIDNAPPED/A21



REVELERS thought they were hearing firecrackers on the final day of the Ati-atihan festival, until they saw the bodies, including that of Supt. Oderlardo Magayanes, acting Aklan police chief, being loaded on a hospital-bound vehicle. ARNOLD ALMACEIN

Leader in Iraq prison scandal gets 10 years

FORT HOOD, Texas—Army Spc. Charles Graner Jr., who grinned in photos of Iraqi prisoners being sexually humiliated but told jurors, "I didn't enjoy what I did there," was sentenced to 10 years behind bars in the first court-martial stemming from the Abu Ghraib prison scandal.

Graner, labeled the leader of a band of rogue guards at the Baghdad prison in late 2003, could have received 15 years.

Asked if he felt remorse after the sentence was handed down on Saturday, Graner said, "There's a war on. Bad things happen."

Graner will be dishonorably discharged when his sentence is completed. He also was demoted to private and ordered to forfeit all pay and benefits.

A day after convicting him, the

LEADER/A22

Police officer under 'tremendous pressure'

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. PDI Visayas Bureau

KALIBO, Aklan—Could he have been under some tremendous pressure? If so, from where? From whom?

Fellow policemen raised this question shortly after PO2 Jonathan Moreño went berserk yesterday and shot dead six people—including his superiors—before he himself was gunned down while Kalibo was

celebrating its famous Ati-atihan festival.

On Saturday, colleagues noticed Moreño had become listless and, at times, oddly silent, impervious to what was happening around him.

Nobody imagined that the next day, the 31-year-old native of Tugbora town in Negros Occidental would train his M-16 rifle on his senior officers.

"He could [have been] suffering from psychological and emo-

tional problems," said PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay. "This can happen to anyone who cannot take the pressure."

Chief Supt. George Aliño, police director for Western Visayas, told reporters Moreño could have been under severe stress because he was a "vital witness" in the case filed by police against Bacolod City-based Jose Kim "Boy" Cuadra, allegedly the top drug lord in Western Visayas.

Cuadra was caught in posses-

sion of shabu in 2003 at the Caticlan airport on his way home after vacationing on Boracay Island.

Moreño, who was formally assigned to the Caticlan police station, was among those who arrested Cuadra.

Aliño said Moreño asked for a transfer of assignment after the case against Cuadra was filed. He was later assigned as one of the alternate close-in security of

POLICE/A22

'Coup,' 'impeachment' remain buzz words

By Amando Doronila

ON JAN. 19, 2001, then Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes announced the withdrawal of military support for President Joseph Estrada, triggering the collapse of his administration. The regime was deposed in just 30 months after Estrada took office on June 30, 1998.

Three days from today, Filipinos will be commemorating the fourth anniversary of the fall of the Estrada administration. In the space of four years, we have had a change of administration, the first one on Jan. 20, 2001 through People Power given legitimacy by the Supreme Court, and an election last May which

awarded an electoral mandate—albeit contentious—to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The triumph of People Power II was variously described by discerning observers in the international press, which was worried over the trend toward extra-constitutional methods of political change in the Philippines

since Edsa 1 in 1986. Edsa II was described as a "soft coup," "democracy on the hoof," "gentle revolution," and "mob rule."

Despite the presidential election last May 10, which was expected to correct the flaws of the two Edsa movements and provide a foundation of stability and continuity to legal regime change in

COUP/A4

Asian migratory birds back at Candaba Swamp



CANDABA Mayor Jerry Pelayo trains his sights on the feathered visitors. JOAN BONDOC

By Tonette Orejas PDI Central Luzon Desk

CANDABA, Pampanga—The Candaba Swamp, one of the three most important wetlands in the Philippines, is back on the Asian bird map.

Migratory birds in Asia have once again shown signs of favoring the swamp as a winter refuge and breeding site, bird experts and enthusiasts said.

Three bird species have returned to several portions of the 32,000-hectare marsh, 50 km northeast of Metro Manila. These are the purple gallinule, coots and the Philippine mallard, according to Timothy Fisher, one of five authors of the book, "Guide to Birds in the Philippines."

The gallinule is similar to a large purple chicken, while coots are black birds with white feathers on their fronts. Mallards are

ASIAN/A21



CANDABA'S 32,000-hectare marsh in Pampanga has become a paradise for birds and bird watchers. JOAN BONDOC

JOAN BONDOC

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/17/05

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila Partly Cloudy
Bogulo Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao Cloudy with Rains
Laoag Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay Partly Cloudy
Legazpi Cloudy with Rains
Calapan Partly Cloudy

Hollabacod Partly Cloudy
Roxas Partly Cloudy
Cebu Partly Cloudy
Tacloban Partly Cloudy
Gen. Santos Partly Cloudy
Zamboanga Partly Cloudy
Cagayan de Oro Partly Cloudy
Davao Partly Cloudy

GMA allies vow to block impeach bid

By Carlito Pablo

ALLIES of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the House of Representatives have served notice that any impeachment complaint filed against her won't prosper, saying that there was no valid issue against her.

"More than just having the numbers to thwart any impeachment complaint, there is no valid issue for a complaint to prosper," said Deputy Speaker Rep. Eduardo Gullas (Alayon, Cebu).

Last week, former Senate President Jovito Salonga said that Ms Arroyo had committed an impeachable offense—obstruction of justice—when she allowed former President Joseph Estrada to go to Hong Kong to undergo knee surgery.

But Gullas said that neither

the Sandiganbayan's order allowing Estrada to undergo knee surgery abroad nor claims of graft and corruption against the administration would suffice to pursue an impeachment complaint.

"It was the Sandiganbayan, not the President, which allowed Estrada's surgery in Hong Kong. The President is serious in stamping out corruption. So where's the beef?" Gullas said.

Salonga had accused Ms Arroyo of violating the rule of law on Estrada's trip. "From the

time she ascended to the presidency in January 2001, GMA has no use for the rule of law. She had always wanted Estrada to go scot-free abroad," Salonga said, adding that the President would do anything to stay in power even it meant violating the law.

Rep. Faysah Dumarpa (Lakas, Lanao del Sur) said that Ms Arroyo's critics haven't come up with a credible allegation of any "culpable violation of the Constitution meriting an impeachment."

"When one alleges a culpable violation, it (violation) should be so blatant in nature and so far we haven't seen or heard of any," Dumarpa said.

Rep. Anthony Miranda (Isabela), spokesperson of Ms Ar-

royo's political party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino, said the congressmen won't even take a second look at any impeachment complaint.

"Congress has more productive measures to attend to," Miranda said.

The administration of Ms Arroyo, whose performance ratings have consistently been dropping since the hotly-contested May 2004 elections, had also been branded as corrupt by Estrada.

But Rep. Antonio Cuenco (Lakas, Cebu City) noted that Estrada's charges of corruption against the Arroyo administration were "merely rehearsed issues."

"Estrada should stop using the President as a scapegoat. Edsa II

happened because people were disillusioned by the corrupt ways of the Estrada regime," Cuenco said.

Rep. Generoso Tulagan (NPC, Pangasinan) also ruled out any impeachment move. "A big number of congressmen will definitely block any move to impeach President Arroyo."

"Majority of the House members are behind President Arroyo. We will only support moves that would be beneficial to the economy and to the country in general," Tulagan said.

Under House rules, for an im-

peachment complaint to prosper, it must first get a majority vote from the House committee on justice on its sufficiency in both form and substance.

Once referred to the floor by the justice committee, the same must secure a majority vote before the impeachment complaint is referred to the Senate for trial.

A complaint need not go through the House justice committee if one-third of all congressmen endorsed it, a number which the opposition bloc doesn't have in the lower chamber.

Only a Mass marks Edsa II anniversary

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is in no mood to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the Edsa People Power II revolt that initially brought her to power in the face of a resurgent opposition led by the man she replaced—former President Joseph Estrada.

Instead, to commemorate Edsa II, the President held a thanksgiving Mass at Malacañang's Ceremonial Hall in place of the usual venue, the Shrine of Mary Queen of Peace on Edsa near the site of the revolt. The Mass was sans fanfare and with no major Edsa II players outside of the Cabinet members in attendance.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the "simple thanksgiving

Mass" was all the Palace had scheduled for the Edsa II anniversary on Jan. 16-20.

Bunye said the President had "intentionally" kept the celebration subdued because "a bigger celebration was being planned for Edsa I on Feb. 25."

"Whoever was available was welcome to attend," said Bunye, who claimed ignorance of the President's schedule on Jan. 20, the anniversary of the day Estrada fled Malacañang.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said it was the Edsa People Power Commission that was preparing the Feb. 22-25 joint celebration of Edsa I and II. "We will see how we will merge the celebrations to show the true spirit of Edsa," he said.

Ermita said yesterday's Mass at the Palace was the "call of the President."

"She wanted the Mass held in Malacañang rather than outside to make an important symbolism that Malacañang is for the people," Ermita said.

Aside from Bunye and Ermita, those at the Mass were First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes and his predecessor, Manila Hotel president Jose Lina Jr., and External Affairs Secretary Ed Pamintuan.

The President did not issue a statement during the 10 a.m. Mass officiated by Fr. Rico Nobleza of the San Antonio de Padua

parish in Parañaque City, unlike last year when she underscored the need for "love and healing."

But Soliman dutifully took up the cudgels for her boss as she answered reporters' questions regarding Estrada's plan to unify the opposition.

"We already had an election and the people have spoken. Let us respect the constitutional process and the voice of the people. If there is a protest, this is being addressed in the proper forum," Soliman said.

On reports of a renewed destabilization effort allegedly to be led by Estrada, Soliman said the President and her administration were more focused on issues that would boost the economy and uplift the lives of the poor rather than on the deposed President.



FIRST Granddaughter Mikaela Arroyo looks up while her grandparents, President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, look down in prayer during the Mass marking the 4th anniversary of Edsa II at Malacañang yesterday. The President has opted for an austere commemoration in keeping with the times.

MITCH MAURICIO

Palace denies meddling

MALACAÑANG yesterday disputed claims it was interfering in judicial matters, specifically in the appointment of Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Teresita de Castro and the Supreme Court's decision barring a local court judge from hearing the expropriation case involving Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piatco).

In an interview over RMN radio, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo had not meddled in the case of President Joseph Estrada in the Sandiganbayan, whose orders she had always respected.

Bunye said the President had a legal leg to stand on in choosing from among the nominees of the Judicial Bar Council whom to appoint to vacant court positions.

Sandiganbayan Justice Edilberto Sandoval resigned last week in disgust over Malacañang's alleged interference in the Estrada plunder case, as well as First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo's purported attempts to influence court appointments.

Bunye also dismissed allegations that Malacañang had a hand in the high court's issuance of a temporary restraining order against Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon, who had compelled the government to pay Piarco a down payment of \$62 million for the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 which it had expropriated.

Solons mull blocking Marcos victims' bill

By Carlito Pablo

THE 'LEFTIST' bloc in the House of Representatives is threatening to withdraw its co-sponsorship of a pending bill providing for compensation for victims of human rights abuses during the Marcos regime due to questionable provisions in the bill.

Representatives Lisa Maza (party-list Gabriela), Satur Ocampo (party-list Bayan Muna) and Joel Virador (party-list Bayan Muna) have expressed grave reservations over certain provisions in House Bill 3315 which seeks to provide at least P10 billion in compensation to martial law victims.

"After having consulted with concerned people's organizations, human rights groups and our constituents, we are constrained to reconsider our co-authorship of the bill unless the following issues are definitively addressed," the three lawmakers said in a letter to the House committee on human rights.

These issues include, among other things, the exclusion of a claimant to the proposed compensation board which will screen applications for damages.

But human rights committee chair Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales (party-list Akbayan) was not cowed by the threat of withdrawal of support by the leftist bloc. "Let them withdraw," Rosales said angrily.

She said the bloc had been represented in the technical working group discussions of the bill and was aware of provisions finalized in the proposed bill.

"They, particularly Satur Ocampo, want to become members of the compensation board," Rosales said on the supposed real agenda of the bloc.

Rosales recalled that it was Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights, who had argued against such a move which might constitute a conflict of interest.

"Highly inappropriate was how Haydee described it," Rosales said.

She also said the bloc "appears to be working under the dictates of other quarters outside the House."

Asked if she was referring to the underground National Democratic Front, Rosales smiled.

Rosales had previously been tagged by the communist movement as a "counter-revolutionary."

Rep. Rafael Mariano (party-list Anakpawis) earlier scored the bill which provides that 9,539 class suit plaintiffs and 24 direct action plaintiffs who won their case against the Marcos estate before a Hawaii court are not automatically classified as claimants.

Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Ma. Sison is one of the 24 direct action plaintiffs.

Mariano said that if the bill were to be followed, these plaintiffs would again have to prove their cases before the proposed compensation board.

Maza said the bill was even "pro-torture" as one provision reads that torture is an act inflicted on those "peacefully exercising their civil and political rights."

"No international human rights convention admits such a qualification. Everyone has the right against being tortured," Maza said.

Rosales, however, said that she was open to amending the provision defining torture.

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MANILA-DUMAGUETE v.v.	P2278	P1498	P1468
MANILA-ILOILO v.v.	P2228	P1468	P1168
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MANILA-ZAMBOANGA v.v.	P2578	P2368	P2068
CEBU-BACOLOD v.v.	P1298	P998	
CEBU-DAVAO v.v.	P1998	P1468	P1168
CEBU-ILOILO v.v.	P1868	P1268	P998

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Drilon pushes audit-free taxpaying

By Christine O. Avendaño

SENATE President Franklin Drilon is urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to adopt his proposal to exempt from a tax audit or assessment taxpayers who voluntarily declare and pay higher taxes.

In a statement issued yesterday, Drilon said he had written the President recommending the implementation of a "no audit program" in the Bureau of Internal Revenue for deserving taxpayers. He proposed that "where for an ad-

ditional 15 percent or 20 percent income tax payment over the preceding year, the taxpayers' return is conclusively considered in order, and he is no longer subjected to assessment."

The Senate president's proposal is designed to "spare the taxpayer the hassles of a tax audit or assessment by BIR personnel."

"It is common knowledge that due to unscrupulous tax collectors, these tax audits or assessments are often perceived as outright harassment or shake-

downs of businessmen," Drilon said.

He added that several businessmen had filed complaints of harassment and extortion against BIR personnel involving the issuance of Tax Verification Notices by the bureau.

Some taxpayers had also complained of being subjected to multiple audits by separate groups of tax examiners.

Drilon said the measure he was proposing should be implemented only for a five-year period beginning taxable year 2004.



BLOWING IN THE WIND

Petals float on a cool early morning breeze at Baywalk at Roxas Boulevard, Manila, symbolizing Filipinos' prayers for victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami. The Philippine government has been sending forensic and medical missions to its affected Asian neighbors in lieu of donations.

ERIK ARAZAS

Noli: Loans to disaster victims straining Pag-Ibig

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—The P3 billion in calamity loans obtained by victims of flash floods and landslides in several Luzon provinces since November last year has strained the housing budget of the home mortgage agency Pag-Ibig, Vice President Noli de Castro said.

The amount represents 15 percent of the P21-billion current budget of Pag-Ibig for socialized and low-cost housing units, De Castro, who is also the chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, added.

On Thursday, the Vice President distributed at least 513 land titles to families in two resettlement areas in Pampanga and Tarlac.

Explaining the diversion of housing funds to calamity loans, Miro Quimbo, Pag-Ibig general manager, said the agency needed to do that to immediately help the victims.

"The demand for calamity loans was high so we had to respond," De Castro said.

The disasters also increased the demand for houses, he said, adding that in Oriental Mindoro alone, some 40,000 families in three towns needed relocation.

Landslide-hit villages in Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Quezon and Catanduanes were also due for resettlement, De Castro could not immedi-

ately say if the funding requirement of the relocation projects would reach the scale of what the national government spent after the Mt. Pinatubo disaster, which was P10 billion.

In at least 16 lowland resettlements in Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales, the defunct Mt. Pinatubo Commission had reported building 48,845 houses. But of 29,914 families, only 8,124 received titles to their lots.

Asked if the HUDCC-led agencies had set aside a contingency fund for sheltering future disaster victims, De Castro said there was no money for the purpose.

New disasters, he said, would put added pressure on housing agencies contending with an overall backlog of about three million units.

Nongovernment organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Gawad Kalinga have been helping ease the pressure on government to provide immediate homes to families displaced by the recent disasters, he said.

De Castro said the HUDCC and agencies under it canceled anniversary programs and Christmas parties to add P3.4 million to the housing budget.

Congress approved a P1-billion budget this year for the National Housing Authority, its general manager Federico Laxa said.

The amount, De Castro said, was only half of the P2 billion needed to resettle 12,500 families affected by the NorthRail project.

Palace unfazed by travel warning

MALACANANG yesterday shrugged off a new travel advisory issued by the United States warning American citizens to take extra precautions when traveling to the Philippines.

In an interview over RMN radio, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said these travel warnings were de kahon [standard] and had no impact on the Philippines because tourism arrivals continued to grow despite them.

He said that even US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone did not heed

Washington's travel advisories. "Last Christmas, he had very many relatives in the Philippines and they spent their vacation here," Bunye said.

The US state department renewed last week its travel advisory on the Philippines because of the rising number of security-related incidents. It warned American citizens of the risk of travel to certain areas due to kidnappings, bombings, and other violent and criminal activities.

Gil Cabacungan Jr.

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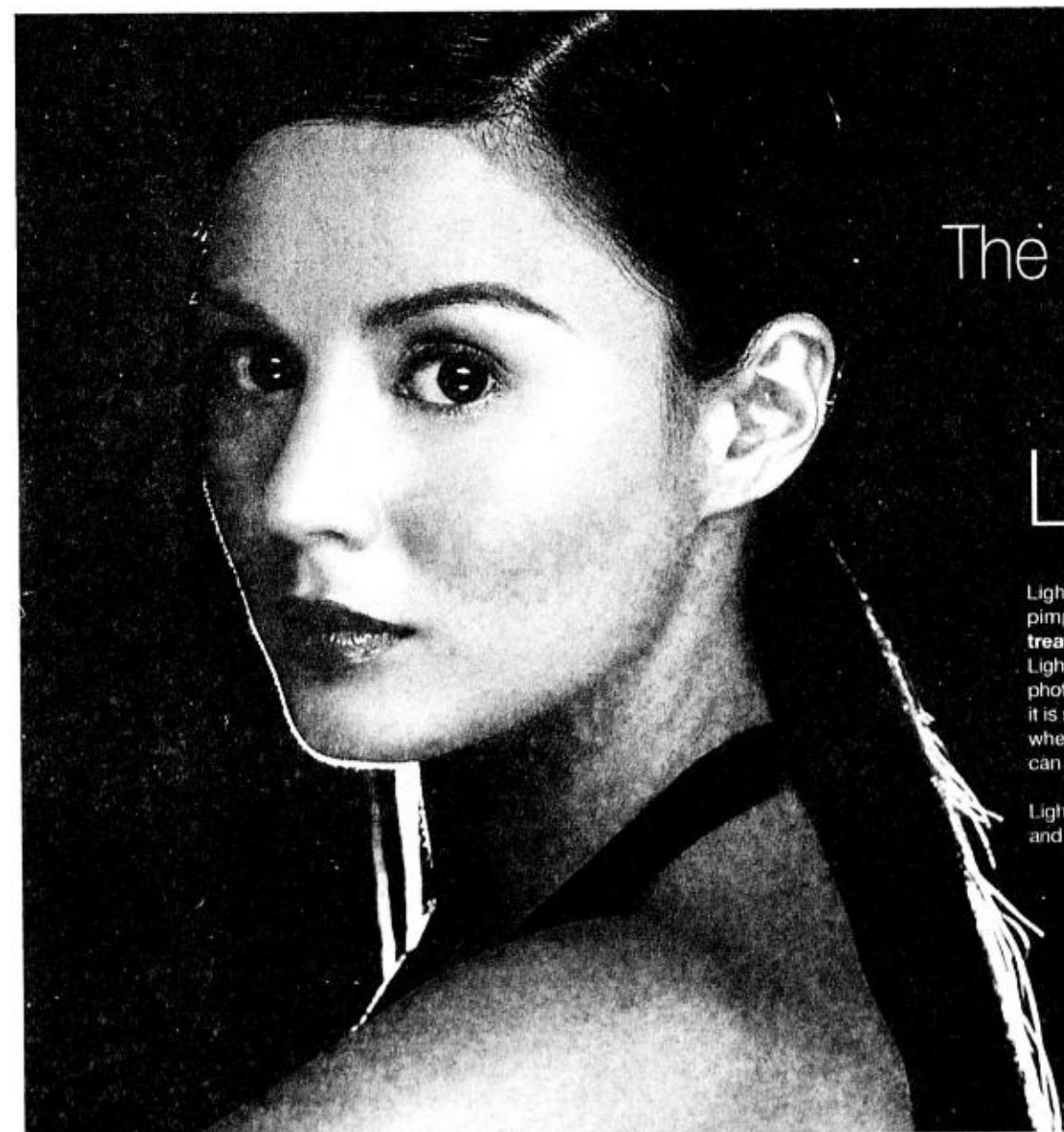
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'Coup,' 'impeachment' remain ...

From page A1
the country, the long-term stability of the current administration is far from assured. Not a few are predicting that the second Arroyo administration faces turbulent squalls of instability and have expressed doubts over its completing its six-year term.

Portents of instability

As the country moves past the first six months of the second Arroyo presidency, there are portents of instability. Among these is that political discourse in the Philippines, at least during the past six months, has been dominated by two buzz words or themes—"coup" and "impeachment."

These two words are resonant in the discussion of public issues in the Philippines. They have an ominous ring because they suggest deeper public dissatisfaction with the Arroyo administration, impatience over results and expectations of immediate relief from economic or social distress. These expectations are not being met by the administration.

The two buzz words suggest the existence of a significant constituency of unrest that can be manipulated by rabble-rousers to abort the life of an administration even before the end of its elected term, either through a coup or impeachment.

The ease with which the words "coup" and "impeachment" are bandied about as alternative methods of changing an unpopular administration is a warning sign that the Philippines is heading toward what might be called "capricious democracy" in search of charismatic, rather than rational, leadership, as an escape route from economic privations.

Despite the abominable experience of the country with the failed charismatic but corrupt and incompetent administration of President Estrada, the country—or at least a significant portion of the population—continues to be trapped in the spell of charisma as an alternative approach to effective and competent, if not honest, government.

Charisma has been marketed to the gullible public as a panacea and cure-all to provide instant relief from poverty and get rid of corrupt officials, let alone create jobs and bring food to the table of the poor for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Whether cutting short the life of an administration either by impeachment or coup, the chances of getting a better administration than that which is sought to be removed, are no better than making charisma the medium for a change for the better.

Impeachment calls

Impatience for immediate change is signaled by the frequency of calls for impeachment—the latest of which was made by former Senate President Jovito Salonga, who has said the President could be impeached for "obstruction of justice, an impeachable offense." Salonga has criticized the President for disregarding the "rule of law" over the medical leave granted to Estrada for knee surgery in Hong Kong—a leave that turned out to be an escape for Estrada and an opportunity to flaunt a scandalous demonstration of high living in a Hong Kong hospital and luxury apartments.

The point of an impeachment is that it is an action to abort the life of an administration. The purpose of impeachment is termination of office.

But Salonga, who was quickly misunderstood, had a larger point to make. He was concerned over the slow process of the plunder case against Estrada in the Sandiganbayan.

"But in a deeper sense, we are

distressed by the breakdown in our system of justice and the almost total absence of the rule of law, despite assertions to the contrary of our high officials from the judicial and executive departments," Salonga said.

"Recoup and revive the rule of law, we insist, and no nonsense this time. When Erap gets back, resume the interrupted trial. No slow-motion system of justice," he argued.

Records show no coup since 1986 has ever received wide public support, regardless of the failings of civil governments.

More important is the fact that the military has failed to be the recruiting field or "inspiring" leadership, and is as much plagued by corruption as civilian administration.

The funeral of Fernando Poe Jr. disclosed a significant constituency for charisma-driven leadership. However, the claim by some pollsters that the turnout at Poe's funeral "reminded the people that he might have actually won" is wishful thinking.

Faced with these unpalatable options for change, we are caught in a bind.

Even so, this should not be a reason for complacency.

We are left with the grim reality of a nonperforming administration that has squandered its political capital in winning majorities in the House and Senate.

This administration, which makes a fetish of rational programs, is sinking under the wave of public disaffection and falling approval rating, as shown by opinion polls over the past six months.

The latest is Pulse Asia's survey last October and November, which showed that a third of the population wanted the President to step down.

This is a warning signal for Ms Arroyo to shape up.

Pulse Asia said the results showed "very deep frustration" with her leadership and with her "failed performance."

The results indicated that during the past six months, the President has failed to overcome perception of lack of legitimacy of her election, stemming from electoral protest alleging election cheating, and to build on that mandate a wider base of legitimacy.

True, the President presented a 10-point reform agenda and eight urgent tax measures to control the swelling fiscal deficit. These offer concrete criteria to measure her accomplishments against goals.

But the score card is poor. Of the eight tax measures only two have been enacted into law.

Despite the poor performance of the Arroyo administration and the frustrations of the people, the Pulse Asia survey found that 65 percent of respondents "disagreed" that military rule was an alternative.

Even so, this should not be a reason for complacency.

From page A1

Leader Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon), Estrada's former Agrarian Reform Secretary Horacio "Boy" Morales, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan.

"This committee now represents the collective leadership of the opposition," said Escudero, who revealed the existence and membership of the committee in a phone interview. "It's a collective leadership because we don't want a personality-based leadership that may spawn conflicts later."

Susan Roces

Asked about the role of Susan Roces, widow of the mainstream opposition's presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., Escudero said the signature campaign started by supporters of her late husband was meant to convince her to "serve as the light and inspiration of the united opposition."

He, however, refused suggestions that the committee of five was a "shadow government" in the midst of projections of turbulent times for the President.

In an indication that the opposition was raring to do battle, Estrada returned to the country swinging away at the Arroyo administration which he accused of graft and corruption. Estrada, president of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, vowed "to unite the people and set the path for them to see a new dawn."

Administration congressmen, however, weren't about to let opposition figures dictate the tempo of the political hostilities.

Plunder case

"Erap should be the last to pontificate about corruption," House Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said.

Nograles said Estrada should instead focus on his defense in his pending trial for plunder at the Sandiganbayan.

"Estrada must remember that he was impeached, ousted from power and now held in detention without bail because of plunder," he said.

Rep. Antonio Cuenco (Lakas, Cebu City) said Estrada should "stop blaming the President for his misfortunes since he personally caused them."

"Edsa II happened because people were disillusioned by the corrupt ways of the Estrada regime," Cuenco said.

But, according to Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, the opposition saw Estrada as its leader and was now moving to strengthen itself.

Lacson-Angara

"Estrada is our recognized leader and since Fernando Poe Jr. passed away, the great bulk of his following gravitated toward Estrada," Enrile said in an interview on Friday, a day before the deposed President returned home after undergoing knee surgery in Hong Kong.

Enrile dismissed talks that the opposition's effort to unite was in order to destabilize the Arroyo administration.

"The opposition has no plans to do any destabilization," he said, noting that the opposition had been very vocal about its views on issues.

He said it was better if people were noisy than quiet about their views, because then that would be "dangerous."

With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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As for opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Escudero said: "The doors are open."

Escudero acknowledged that Sen. Edgardo Angara, with whom Lacson has had a long-running verbal feud even before the campaign period for last year's presidential elections started, had yet to attend a meeting of the committee.

"But Senator Angara is represented by (former Rep. Miguel) Mike Romero for the LDP (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino)," he said.

Angara and Estrada supported Poe in the last presidential election. Lacson ran on his own, refusing to yield to become Poe's running mate.

"We do not want personal conflicts to hinder efforts at uniting the opposition," Escudero said of the Angara-Lacson feud.

Enrile, who chairs the PMR, insisted that the "bulk of the leadership" in the opposition was "intact" despite the ongoing rift between Angara and Lacson. This, he said, was made up of the PMP and those parties under the KNP, including Angara's LDP.

'Masa' unity

Right now, Enrile said, the PMP officials were organizing the party "in the lower levels."

"We would want to grow as an organization and to strengthen from the grassroots level," he said.

He said Estrada could unify the "masa" since they had always supported the latter.

But a leftist fishermen's group scoffed at Estrada's proclamation to lead the anti-administration forces.

Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) information officer Gerry Albert Corpuz said in a statement that the deposed President could act as one of the stalwarts of all anti-Arroyo forces, "but he could not be the rallying point against the incumbent President."

Corpuz said that although his group recognized that the Estrada camp was one of the blocs in the broad anti-Arroyo forces, it doubted Estrada's political capacity to unite and lead all anti-GMA groups in the country.

But he acknowledged that Estrada's "political tit-for-tat against the regime will be of big help in isolating ... the Arroyo administration from the people."

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"The opposition has no plans to do any destabilization," he said, noting that the opposition had been very vocal about its views on issues.

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With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Chavit sees vindication ...

From page A1

Former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson said he had not raised a howl about the possible escape of former President Joseph Estrada to Hong Kong or China, "he would still be there, living like a king."

Singson, whose "Juetengate" exposed led to his former comrade's ouster from Malacañang, had warned that Estrada might use his medical furlough to flee to China beyond the reach of the Sandiganbayan, which is trying him for plunder.

The prosecution's star witness aired these fears at a press conference last Dec. 20—seven days before Estrada left for Hong Kong for his knee surgery—along with legal advocacy groups that initiated the plunder case.

Singson even threatened to withdraw his support from the Arroyo administration over the court-approved Estrada trip, suggesting that it was a Palace-backed political concession to the influential opposition leader.

'Not humiliated'

"Hindi ako napahiya, nanalo pa nga ako (I was not humiliated, I proved my point)," Singson said in a phone interview, a day after Estrada returned to the country in compliance with the court's order.

Had he not made a lot of noise, the governor said, "Estrada would still be taking his time."

Singson pointed out that the deposed leader had wanted to ask the Sandiganbayan for a longer stay in Hong Kong and then took it back. He was referring to Estrada's reported bid on Jan. 6 to extend his trip to Jan. 21, or six days beyond the period approved by the court.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villanueva, who, like Singson, regarded Estrada as a flight risk, said: "This is one instance I am happy to be proven wrong."

The government lawyer said he was just "happy that he (Estrada) returned" so the 3-year-old plunder trial could continue with no more delays.

Barring new hitches, today's resumption of the Estrada trial will see the continued presentation of defense witnesses.

Senior Associate Justice Edilberto Sandoval, who announced last Monday that he was quitting the special division for health reasons, is also expected to return today after the Supreme Court turned down his resignation.

Singson reiterated an earlier challenge to his estranged buddy: "If he's really innocent, he should stop delaying the trial."

No 'overkill'

For its part, the Philippine National Police said it was not an overkill to assign 5,000 men for the arrival of Estrada on Saturday.

"There was no overkill, no exaggeration. We deployed just the right number of officers," Director Avelino Razon Jr., National Capital Region Police Office chief, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Razon said "only" 5,000 of the NCRPO's 15,200 men were deployed that day. And not all were assigned to the arrival.

"We also had our day-to-day duties against criminality, we also had to guard vital installations," he said.

Security was so tight that Estrada was whisked from the airport straight to his vacation house in Tanay, Rizal.

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Stop passing the buck on drug cases —Gonzalez

By Philip C. Tubeza and Nelson F. Flores

QUIT the finger-pointing.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday urged government officials to stop passing the buck in the alleged sloppy prosecution of high-profile illegal drug cases last year.

"There is a process, so let us stop pointing fingers at anyone," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez was reacting to administration Rep. Antonio Cuenco's assertion that the government had bungled the prosecution of drug cases.

Cuenco, chair of the House oversight committee on dangerous drugs, said on Wednesday that of the 21 raids on shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) laboratories and drug storage facilities in 2004, only one led to the filing of criminal cases against the suspected owners and masterminds.

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Director General Anselmo Avenido Jr. on Thursday said that government prosecutors should answer Cuenco's allegations.

He also renewed his call to Congress to pass a law that would penalize landlords who rent out their properties to illegal drug manufacturers.

Avenido issued the call in response to Cuenco's revelation.

Gonzalez said the police had filed several cases before the Department of Justice but some of these had not yet found their way to court because prosecutors were still conducting the preliminary investigations.

"Let us not sensationalize these matters. There are setbacks but we are trying to address them already," Gonzalez said.

"We are not letting our guard down. Certainly, not under my watch," he added.

Gonzalez said cases could not be filed immediately in court without due process being satisfied during the preliminary investigation.

He said cases had been filed for the recent drug raids in Bataan, Valenzuela City and Davao, and that he had ordered state prosecutors to hasten the resolution of the cases.

Gonzalez also noted that some policemen did not appear during the case hearings.

"That is why I have ordered that the names of these policemen be submitted to me so that I could take action against them," he said.

Graft charges filed in P310-M overprice

By Volt C. Contreras

FROM P80 million, the cost of irrigation projects meant for upland farmers got "bloated" to P390 million by a stroke of a pen.

The Office of the Ombudsman cited this staggering case of cost-padding as it filed charges yesterday against former Mountain Province Gov. Sario Malinas and his chief planning officer for falsification of public documents before the Sandiganbayan.

Malinas and the provincial planning and development coordinator, Lily Rose Kollin, stand accused of increasing the projects' price tag by almost five times in November 2001.

The alleged irregularity was reported to graft investigators by a local priest, Fr. Valentin C. Dimoc of the Social Action Development Center in Bontoc, Mountain Province.

The case involved projects that the Provincial Development Council endorsed to the Department of Agriculture through the National Irrigation Administration for funding, according to Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto Nocos.

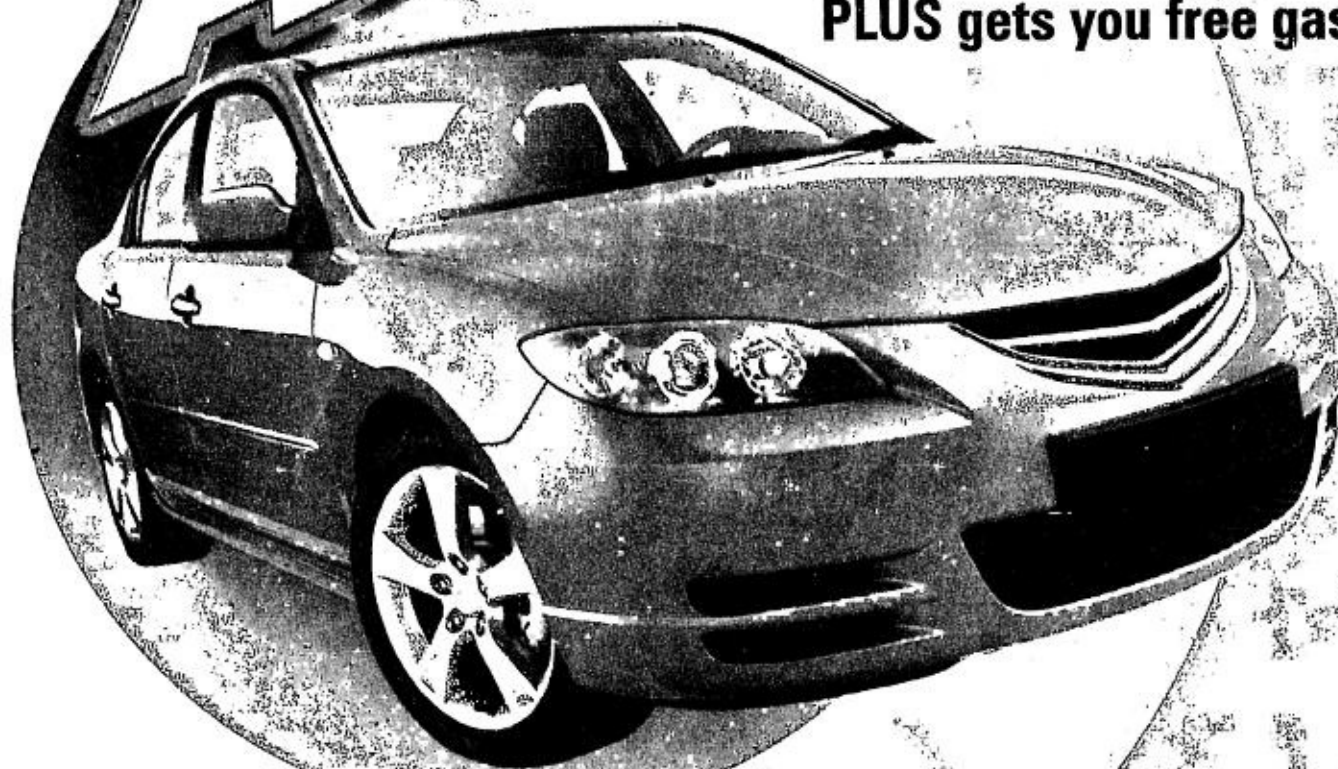
Investigators learned that in a meeting held on Nov. 6, 2001, the PDC pegged the cost of the projects at P80 million.

However, a PDC resolution that later came out based on the minutes of that meeting "reflected and bloated the estimated irrigation project amount to P390,227,207 instead of P80 million," Nocos said.

Bearing this "falsified entry," the resolution was "attested (to) and certified correct by respondent Kollin," and was eventually approved by Malinas in his capacity as PDC's presiding officer.

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WE WON'T TAKE IT LYING DOWN

Militant groups continue to protest the violence attending the strike of sugar mill workers at the Cojuangco-owned Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac, at the Quezon Memorial Circle yesterday. The striking workers have defied a return-to-work order issued by the labor department.

MITCH MAURICIO

Church backing sought for pay hike

By Blanche S. Rivera

MILITANT farmers and fishermen yesterday sought the support of the Catholic Church for a proposed bill granting a P125 across-the-board wage increase to private workers nationwide.

The Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA), a national organization of agriculture-based workers and farmers, and the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) urged the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to launch a campaign supporting the bill.

"In the name of national interest, of the people's desire to have a decent living and of the collective aspiration of millions of Filipino workers... we appeal to the country's religious leaders to support the approval of the P125 wage hike bill in Congress," Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

The House committee on labor and employment last week approved House Bill No. 345 consolidating the bills that propose an increase of P125 for all private employees, whether agricultural or non-agricultural.

Hicap said the bill would benefit 258,000 workers in fish-

pond and aquaculture farms, and another 56,000 in the commercial fishing sector.

Some nine to 13 million regular and seasonal farm workers nationwide would also benefit from the proposed wage hike, according to UMA acting national chair Roy Morilla.

Morilla said UMA would seek a dialogue with the country's bishops and other religious leaders to gather support for their campaign which, he said, would surely face "an uphill battle."

"We are expecting agents and lobbyists of big businesses to launch a major campaign against

the proposed P125 across-the-board wage hike. That's why we expect a major class battle on the proposed wage increase. But we are ready for that," Morilla said.

The farmers' group will launch a signature campaign for the P125 across-the-board wage hike and form a collective lobbying group to talk to and "enlighten" the members of Congress on the workers' need for higher wages.

"We will strongly advocate for the passage of P125 pay hike bills in both chambers. The approval of the P125 pay hike is a matter of life and death to us. We hope the CBCP will join us in this noble cause," Hicap said.

Rebid \$204-M LRT project, corruption watchdog urges

THE CITIZENS vs Corruption Task Force has asked Malacañang to reconsider the award of the \$204-million LRT Line 1 Capacity Expansion Project to a Japanese firm which had failed to comply with the bid security requirement, and to rebid it instead in order to remove all suspicions of irregularity.

Speaking for the task force, former Sen. Francisco S. Tatad said Malacañang would be well-advised to simply follow a Department of Justice and Department of Transportation and Communication recommendation

that a new bidding be held.

The task force expressed disappointment that the Light Rail Transit Authority Board completely ignored the advice of then Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong and the DOTC undersecretary for rail and alternate chair of the LRTA, Jose L. Cortes Jr., and simply awarded the project to a bidder which had failed to comply with the bid security requirement.

"This deal does not help the country's shattered political image, whether at home or abroad," said Tatad, who chairs the task

force, in a press statement.

The bid document requires that a bid be secured, at the bidder's option, by cash, manager's or cashier's check, bank draft or a bank guarantee issued by a reputable international bank, and confirmed by a local correspondent bank or by a Philippine government depository bank such as the Land Bank of the Philippines or the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Three Japanese firms submitted bids for the project, which will be funded with a loan from the Japan

Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). The companies were Marubeni Corp., Kanematsu-Kawasaki Steel Consortium and SIJV, a joint venture formed by Sumitomo Corp. and Inochu Corp.

Of the three, Marubeni claimed to be the only one to have complied with the requirement, but it was disqualified by the bids committee.

On Dec. 17, 2003, Datumanong wrote Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza suggesting a new bidding to erase all suspicions of impropriety. The recommendation, however, went unheeded.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL



Monday, January 17, 2005
2nd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Heb 5:1-10
Gospel: Mark 2:18-22

One day, when the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees were fasting, some people asked Jesus, "Why is it that both the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but yours do not?" Jesus answered, "How can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the day will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them and on that day they will fast.

No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old coat, because the new patch will shrink and tear away from the old cloth, making a worse tear. And no one puts new wine into old wine-skins, for the wine would burst the skins and then both the wine and the skins would be lost. But new wine, new skins!"

Commentary

Already Jesus is running into resistance from his own leaders because of his practices. He and his disciples do not fast like John's followers or the Pharisees. When questioned he tells them he is the bridegroom—in prophetic terms, the messiah! And that while his presence is with them there is no fasting. But the warning comes too: there will all too soon come a time when there will be cause for fasting when he is taken from them.

Jesus is something altogether new, like a piece of new cloth that cannot be sewn into a piece of cloth that is unraveling and torn or like new wine that will burst asunder on old skin. Jesus is shockingly new, a discontinuity in the continuity tradition—do we ever let this reality shock us into radical change? Does any area of our life burst apart because of the presence of Jesus who brings a kingdom for the poor and justice for those most in need?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES



CRIMINAL LAW (CRIMES AGAINST PERSONAL LIBERTY AND SECURITY)—Trespass to dwelling—Facts and circumstances necessary for inclusion in the information are determined by reference to the definition and elements of the specific crime. In trespass to dwelling, the elements are: (1) the offender is a private person; (2) that he enters the dwelling of another; and (3) such entrance is against the latter's will. The exact date when the alleged trespass occurred is not an essential element of the offense of trespass. It is sufficient that the Complaint or Information states that the crime has been committed at any time as near as possible to the date of its actual commission. Rule 110, Section 11 of the Rules of Court provides that it is not necessary to state in the complaint or information the precise time the offense was committed except when time is a material ingredient of the offense, but the act may be alleged to have been committed at any time as near to the actual date at which the offense was committed as the information or complaint will permit. A variance between the time set out in the indictment and that established by the evidence during trial does not constitute an error so serious as to warrant reversal of a conviction solely on that score. [Justice Quinsombing, First Division, Marzalado, Jr., People, G.R. No. 152997 November 10, 2004]

BY R. B. VERA

Tourism targets specific markets in P300-M drive

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism is embarking this year on a P300-million "market specific" promotion drive to boost foreign visitor arrivals as well as spur domestic tourism, Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said Thursday.

In February, the "Wow Philippines!" and "Biyahé Tayo!" slogans of former tourism secretaries Richard Gordon and Roberto Pagdanganan, respectively, would give way to Durano's "I Love Philippines!...Biyahé Na!"—at least in the domestic and North American travel markets.

Durano said the DOT's promotions would be geared to what the travelers in a particular market want. For South Korea, the campaign will have for its theme "Feel the Philippines," while in Japan the Philippines would be advertised as "Premium Resort Islands."

"We will have a tighter focus now since our promotion efforts will center on what the markets prefer, a reverse of the previous campaigns which were made without knowing what the markets wanted," Durano said at the general membership meeting of the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp.

The PCVC, which Durano chairs, is an attached agency of the DOT comprised of travel agencies, tour operators, transport firms, hotels and resorts, convention and exhibit organizers, and other tourism-related industries.

The "Biyahé Tayo" theme, sung by the country's top artists, would be recast and given a more upbeat arrangement similar to the "Wow Philippines!" commercial.

The new song will be sung by pop diva Regine Velasquez who would be the sole endorser of Philippine destinations to local tourists and returning contract workers, expatriates and second- and third-generation Filipinos in North America.

The word "love" will be represented by a heart. In the print and television ads, the heart would appear in many forms: Vigan sausages and Bicol pili nuts arranged into heart-shape, the heart-shaped mask of an Ati-atihan dancer, and the like.

Durano said the "I Love Philippines...Biyahé Na!" drive would be conducted by the telecommunications firm, Smart Philippines Inc., for the DOT at no cost to the government.

Project presenter Ricky Isla said the new theme affirms pride for the Philippines and expresses a call to action that imbues a sense of urgency, which would remind Filipinos not to be foreigners in their own land.

The promotion drive would be split into three phases: Destinations and fiestas from February to May; food and shopping on June to August, and people and culture from September to December.

Smart would conduct the drive through its subscribers and partners in conjunction with its "I Love Smart" campaign.

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Editor Luverne B. Gueco

The **WORLD****Tsunami corpses fester in crushed Indonesia town**

LHOK NGA, Indonesia—Bodies still litter some Indonesian beaches three weeks after a tsunami struck and help is only trickling in to the remote village of Lhok Nga—a sign of the devastation facing survivors of the Dec. 26 disaster.

"What we desperately need here is more volunteers and facilities to help us evacuate the bodies and wreckage," said Ahmad Syuhada, a resident of what was once a thriving fishing town at Sumatra's northern tip.

"I've seen dogs nibble human remains. It's horrific," Syuhada said on Sunday as a bloated white corpse floated in the estuary near the town's collapsed bridge.

Relief workers are pouring into Indonesia's Aceh province, which bore the brunt of the Dec. 26 tsunami that killed more than 168,000 people across South and Southeast Asia. In Aceh alone, more than 115,000 people died.

But Lhok Nga, once a town of some 15,000 people about 20 km

from the provincial capital of Banda Aceh, shows the limits of the aid drive.

Scores of survivors queued near the ruins of the bridge, where boats ferried food brought by people from Banda Aceh across a narrow inlet to the town.

Many said they were getting little but rice and noodles—most of it from friends and family rather than relief agencies—and they needed everything ranging from eggs to cooking oil.

The shoreline, scraped virtually clean by the wave, is dotted with wrecked boats. No one seems to know how many people died, but all agree it was a lot.

A handful of Indonesian sol-

diers and aid workers searched for corpses amid the rubble of houses, schools, mosques and a military dormitory.

There were no signs of any foreign aid workers or medical teams in the town. On the Banda Aceh side of the ruined bridge, body bags were lined up ready for transport to mass graves. But in the town, corpses were scattered in the ruins and along the shoreline.

Naima, wearing a black and gold Muslim headscarf, patiently sat on the seashore before taking a boat to see her 16-year-old daughter in Meulaboh, a nearby coastal town where officials say a third of the population might have perished.

"I hitchhiked here to borrow some money from my brother to get my daughter. She's been crying all the time, she doesn't have any money and afraid to come

here by boat," said the 40-year-old woman who lost her husband in the disaster.

Nasir used his green wooden boat to transport both people and food across the stretch of water to the Banda Aceh road, charging between 30,000 to 50,000 rupiah (\$3.27 to \$5.46) per head. He said he needed the money to buy sugar, eggs and milk.

"This is what we have left—this boat—to make our way in life. At this point I don't know what I'm going to do in the future," said Nasir, who used to be a construction worker.

A group of people set off from Lhok Nga for the neighboring village of Leupung, which was even more badly hit by the tsunami.

"It's totally destroyed, and we're going back to Leupung and help bury the bodies. The place is abandoned," said Hamdan, who now lives in a refugee camp. **Reuters**



NORAH Jones performs in New York during a live broadcast of the telethon "Tsunami Aid: A Concert of Hope," to aid victims of the tsunami tragedy, Jan. 15, with all donations going to the American Red Cross International Response Fund. **AP**

Europeans gape as US steals tsunami glory

By Mark John

BRUSSELS—As Europeans dug deep into their pockets to help victims of Asia's tsunami they could only watch as the rescue dash of US aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln stole the headlines.

The role played by thousands of US troops in the tsunami relief effort has not only been a boon to the US image in the world, but also exposed Europe's inability to act quickly in a crisis.

"The real question is: could Europe come together and do likewise on the ground at a distant locale?" said Bill Frist, the top Republican in the US Senate, during a visit to Brussels last week.

"I think the answer to that would be no," said Frist, just returned from Sri Lanka where he

observed the aid mission.

In a show of generosity matched by none, European Union states have come up with a huge \$2 billion of aid, not counting donations from private citizens and debt-easing pacts with countries hit by the Dec. 26 tidal wave.

But in the critical few days after the disaster, money alone could not help the needy in areas such as Indonesia's Aceh province, cut off from the outside world by the devastation wreaked on its roads and communications infrastructure.

It was only the Jan. 1 arrival of US Sea Hawk helicopters from the Abraham Lincoln which began releasing the aid uselessly piling up in the airport of regional capital Banda Aceh.

Keen to show America's best

side to Muslims angered by its Middle East policies, Washington added further air and sea power and boosted troop numbers to over 16,000—dwarfing in size the French, British and other EU contingents.

It was of course convenient that the Abraham Lincoln was on hand after a port visit to Hong Kong. But few believe Europe could under any circumstances have mounted such a big operation so quickly.

"We simply haven't got the kit," said defense analyst Daniel Keohane at the London-based Center for European Reform (CER).

No one suggests Europe should have an aircraft carrier patrolling the Indian Ocean. But Keohane said the tsunami showed Europe lacks sufficient airlift to carry lots of troops and equipment quickly

over large distances.

While the United States has over 200 strategic lift aircraft for dispatching troops, kit and supplies, only Britain among the Europeans has such a capability with four leased Boeing C-17s.

Mid-air refueling—vital to covering long distances quickly—is also identified as another shortfall.

"We never claimed we could act as rapidly as the Americans," said Cristina Gallach, spokesperson for European Union policy chief Javier Solana.

"It takes time to develop the structures of the ESDP," she said of the European Security and Defense Policy, which EU leaders agreed in 1999 should give Europe the military wherewithal to react to international crises autonomously. **Reuters**

Hollywood, music idols hold tsunami aid concert

WASHINGTON—With Madonna belting out "Imagine" and Norah Jones crooning "We're all in this thing together," top stars of Hollywood and the music industry participated in a televised concert to raise funds for Asia's tsunami victims.

Stevie Wonder, Nelly, John Mayer, Elton John, Diana Ross and Maroon 5 also rendered numbers in the telethon late Saturday while Brad Pitt, George Clooney and other movie stars answered phones, and chatted with viewers calling in to make a donation to the tsunami relief effort.

Hollywood stars Halle Berry, Robert de Niro, Clint Eastwood, Meg Ryan, Morgan Freeman, Ben Affleck and Nicholas Cage made

personal appeals over the commercial-free two-hour show, broadcast live from venues in Los Angeles, New York and London. "Tsunami Aid: A Concert of Hope" was telecast on leading American network NBC and affiliated cable stations.

Donations went to the American Red Cross International Response Fund in support of victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami that killed at least 163,000 people and uprooted millions of others from their homes in a dozen countries along the Indian Ocean coast.

"All the performers with us tonight are here because they were moved by the massive need of those hit by the tsunamis," said movie star Andy Garcia. **AFP**



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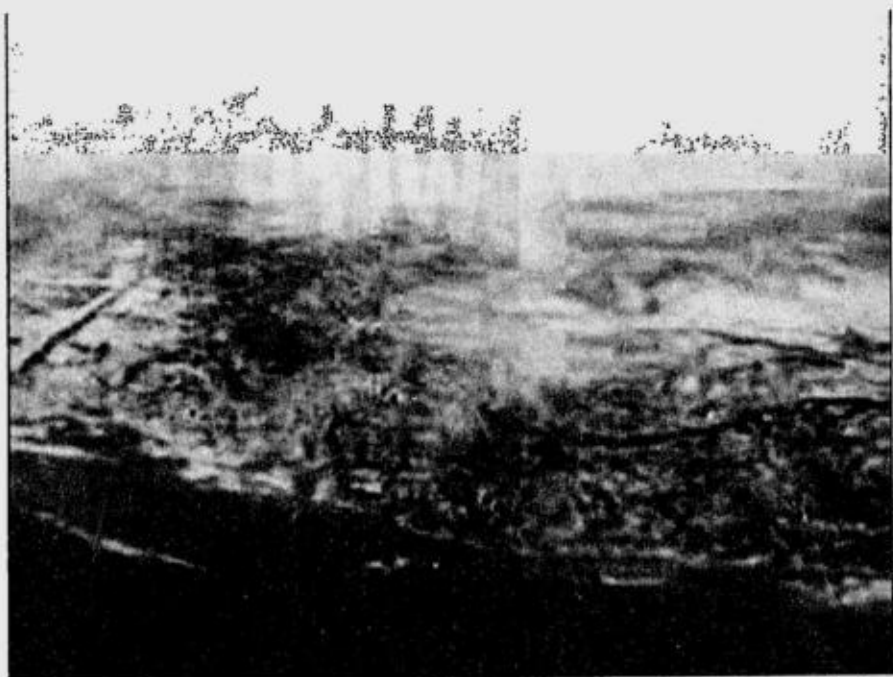
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COMPOSITE photo taken Jan. 14 by ESA's Huygens probe during its successful descent to land on Saturn's moon Titan released by the ESA. It shows the boundary between the lighter-colored uplifted terrain, marked with what appear to be drainage channels, and darker lower areas. **AFP**

Photos from Saturn moon Titan may give clues to origins of Earth

DARMSTADT, Germany—Drainage channels, canyons, rivulets winding their way to a vast ocean of methane: these were some of the initial impressions of scientists to the first photos taken of Saturn's moon Titan which could provide clues to the origins of Earth.

The pictures were taken Friday after the European Space Agency's (ESA) Huygens probe successfully parachuted down to the surface of Saturn's largest moon, beaming back more than 300 photographs of Titan's misty surface and sound recordings from across the solar system.

"It is impossible to resist speculation that these are some kind of drainage channels, canyons also maybe a shoreline," said Marty Tomasko, a University of Arizona specialist who heads the project's imaging team, showing a picture taken 16 kilometers from the surface.

Titan is the only moon in the solar system to have clouds and a thick, planet-like atmosphere.

Even though it may have clues as to the chemical processes that unfolded on the infant Earth, Titan is quite unlikely to have life.

With a surface temperature of -180 Celsius (-292 Fahrenheit) and barely illuminated by the distant Sun, it has none of the ingredi-

ents—warmth, light and liquid water—deemed essential for organisms. If there is an ocean on Titan, it is likely to be of frozen methane, scientists believe.

Some Huygens pictures taken by the tiny robot laboratory appeared to show boulders dotted across a flat landscape, others showed what looked like channels cutting through the moon's surface.

Showing a shot of boulder-like formations taken close up, Tomasko said that the objects "could be ice water blocks," measuring no more than 15 centimeters in diameter.

However, he warned that it would take years of analysis before the pictures finally give up their secrets.

"Don't expect any geological explanation at this point," he said.

The Huygens probe separated from its US-built mother ship Cassini to land on Titan, the largest satellite of Saturn, after a 2.1-billion trek across the solar system.

The probe headed to Titan's surface carrying half a dozen instruments within a clam-like shell to film and measure the moon's weather system and methane-rich atmosphere during a two-and-a-half-hour descent. **AFP**

Frail Mandela buries last son who died of AIDS

QUNU, South Africa—A frail-looking Nelson Mandela buried his last son in a remote South African field on Saturday, wearing a red AIDS ribbon to symbolize the fight against the disease that killed him a week ago.

Thousands of people, including South Africa's political elite, gathered near Mandela's childhood home in Qunu, where family members held a vigil overnight for his son Makgatho, 54.

The 86-year-old anti-apartheid icon, holding a cane and supported by his wife Graca Machel, looked pained as he walked slowly to drop a yellow rose and handful of earth into the grave, where Makgatho was buried near his mother, brother and sister.

Two men in traditional robes chanted exhortations in Xhosa, the language for much of the ceremony, which was carried out at the family graveyard just meters from where the young Mandela lived.

Both Mandela and his wife, who grasped his hand on his knee for much of the ceremony, wore red ribbons supporting the war against an epidemic that affects an estimated one in nine South Africans—more people than in any other nation.

Zwelonke Sisulu, son of Mandela's late African National Congress comrade Walter Sisulu, praised Mandela for announcing that Makgatho died from AIDS—a move that broke one of the most stubborn African taboos surrounding the pandemic.

"There is a disease that is confronting not just our nation but the entire world," said Sisulu, a cousin and close friend of Makgatho, who died on Jan. 6.

"Stay alive—AIDS kills," a clergyman said in an address.

Mandela's decision to announce that his son had died from AIDS was hailed as courageous by many engaged in the battle against the disease's ravages in South Africa.

Mandela's spirited public campaign against AIDS contrasts with that of his successor Thabo Mbeki, who for a long time questioned the link between AIDS and the HIV virus and has faced criticism for not providing life-prolonging drugs to sufferers quickly.



Mandela's ally in the struggle against apartheid white rule, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, said a prayer at the start of the funeral. Mbeki was also present.

Makgatho was Mandela's son by his first wife Evelyn, who died in May 2004. Another son, Madiba Thembekile, died in a road crash in 1969. The apartheid regime refused to give Mandela leave from prison to attend his funeral.

Some 3,000 people gathered for Saturday's funeral, close by the home Mandela built after his release from jail and the cluster of round huts and houses where he spent his early years herding sheep and cattle. **Reuters**

FORMER South African President Nelson Mandela (center) with his wife Graca Machel (left) and his grandson Mandla (right) during the memorial service for his late son Makgatho Mandela, at the Central Methodist church in Johannesburg, South Africa Jan. 11. **AP**

Americans accused of badly damaging historic Babylon

LONDON—As the United States prepared to hand back the ancient ruins of Babylon to Iraqi authorities Saturday, a leading British archaeologist alleged that Polish and US troops had caused "substantial damage" to a site that dates back to the dawn of history.

John Curtis, curator of the British Museum's Ancient Near East department, said the US-led forces, which have used the old city as a base since invading Iraq in 2003, had seriously compromised future scientific research at the site.

Among the alleged depredations, Curtis said entire sections of the city had been flattened and covered with gravel, paving stones that had survived 2,600 years had been crushed by heavy military vehicles, and decorative bricks around the celebrated Ishtar Gate had been cracked and dislodged where people tried to prise them out of the wall.

Curtis based his report on findings during a tour of the site last month.

In response to the report, US military spokesperson Lt. Col. Steve Boylan said US-led forces had done their best to safeguard Babylon.

"There is no perfect solution. We do everything we can to protect the site and we continue to do so."

Boylan told AFP all construction work had been frozen in Babylon since June 2004 when the US military ordered a halt to projects because of concern about damage to the archaeological jewels.

Before that, the US-led forces had consulted the Babylon museum director about any work needed to be done around the ruins, he said.

Although the United States has defended its decision to establish a base at Babylon, about 100 kilometers south of Baghdad, Curtis said it was "regrettable that a military camp of this size should then have been established on one of the most important archaeological sites in the world."

"This is tantamount to establishing a military camp around the Great Pyramid in Egypt or around Stonehenge in Britain," he said.

The only positive thing he had to say about the US presence is that it discouraged looting in the early stages after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. **AFP**

US frees 80 Afghans from Guantanamo

KABUL—Some 80 Afghans held as terror suspects at the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay have been released and flown back to Afghanistan, an Afghan court official said on Sunday.

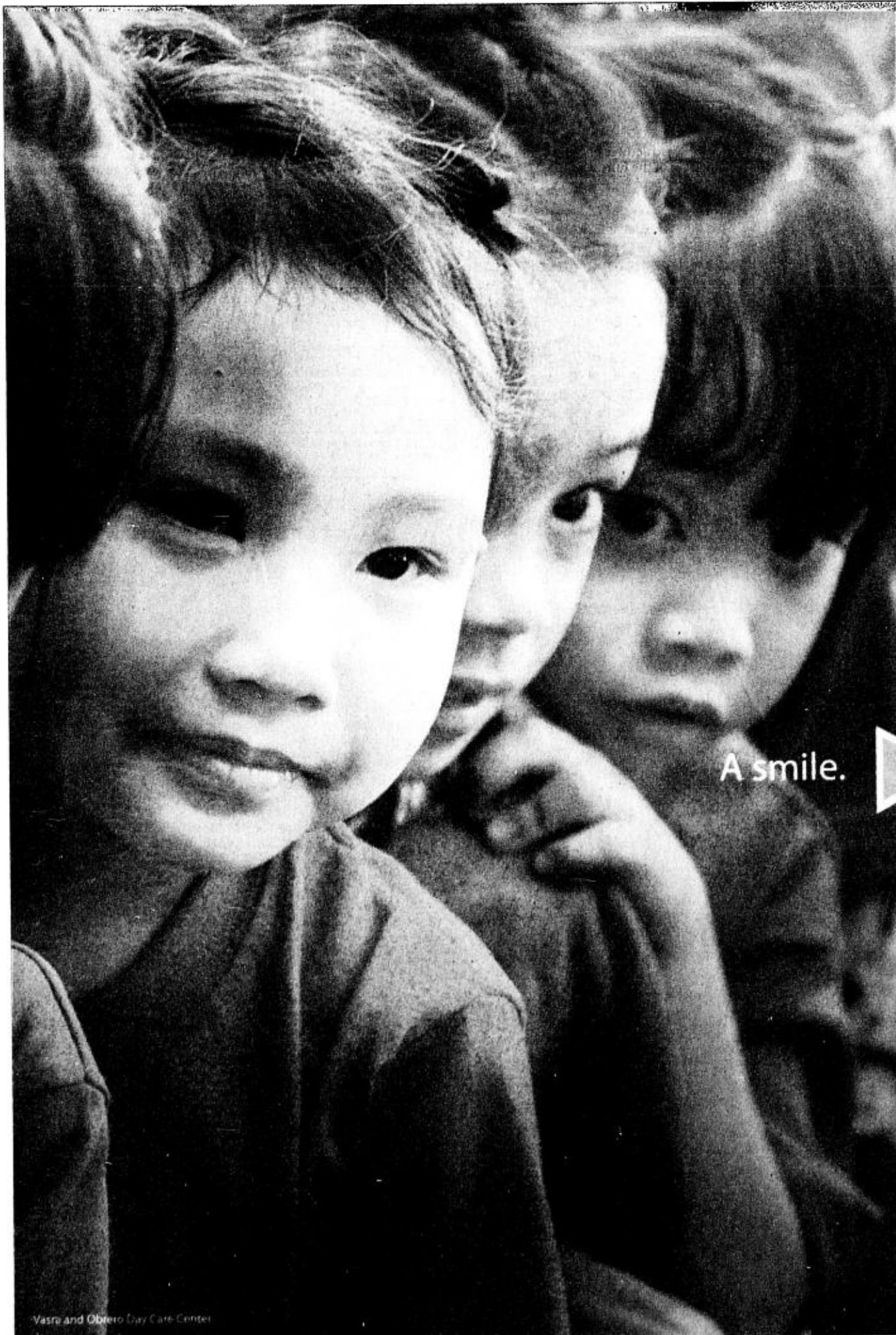
The United States had previously released a total of around 200 prisoners from its remote base on the southeast tip of Cuba where suspects were first taken bound and shackled three years ago in the wake of the US-led war in Afghanistan.

"Around 80 prisoners have been brought

from Guantanamo and they will be freed today after Supreme Court officials speak to them," court spokesperson Wahid Mozhda told Reuters.

US-led forces toppled Afghanistan's Taliban government in late 2001 for failing to surrender al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, architect of the Sept. 11 attacks on US cities.

Hundreds of Afghan Taliban and foreign al-Qaida fighters were captured during and after the conflict and many of them were sent to Guantanamo for interrogation. **Reuters**



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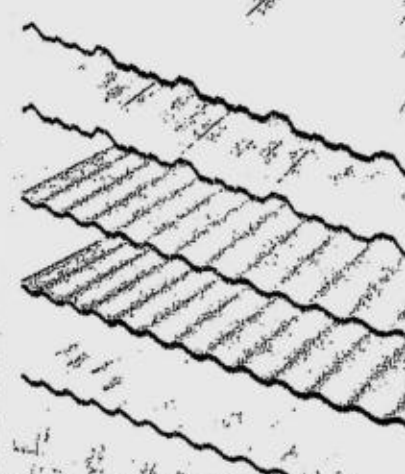
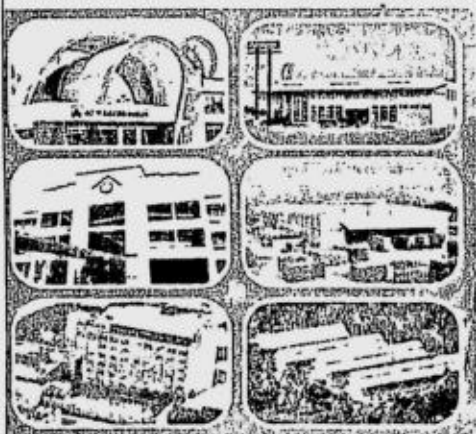
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The WORLD

MONDAY,
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Hitler ordered Pope Pius kidnapped, says Italy paper

VATICAN CITY—Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler gave one of his generals a direct order to kidnap Pope Pius XII during World War II but the officer did not obey, Italy's leading Roman Catholic newspaper reported on Saturday.

Avvenire, which is owned by the Italian Conference of Roman Catholic bishops, said new details of the plot had emerged in documents presented to the Vatican in favor of putting the controversial wartime Pontiff on the road to sainthood.

Elements of alleged plots to abduct the Pope during Germany's occupation of Italy have already emerged in the past from some historians, but Avvenire's full-page report said its details were new.

Avvenire said Hitler feared the Pope would be an obstacle to his plans for global domination and because the dictator wanted to eventually abolish Christianity and impose National Socialism as a sort of new global religion.

The newspaper said a plot that was code-named Operation Rabat had originally been planned for 1943 but was not carried out that year for unspecified reasons.

It said that in 1944, shortly before the Germans retreated from Rome, SS General Karl Friedrich Otto Wolff, a senior occupation officer in Italy, had been ordered by Hitler to kidnap the Pope.

According to the newspaper, Wolff returned to Rome from his meeting with Hitler in Germany and arranged for a secret meeting with the Pope. Wolff went to the Vatican in civilian clothes at night with the help of a priest.

The newspaper said Wolff told the Pope of Hitler's orders and assured him he had no intention of carrying them out himself, but warned the Pontiff to be careful "because the situation (in Rome) was confused and full of risks."

Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini had already fallen and set up a German-backed puppet regime in northern Italy. The German occupation of Rome was in its dying days. Allied forces were advancing on the capital, which they liberated on June 5, 1944.

As a test of Wolff's good faith, Pope Pius asked for him to free two Italian resistance leaders who had been condemned to death. Wolff arranged for them to be released, the paper said.

Avvenire said the details of the plot are in testimony Wolff gave before he died in Germany to Church officials accumulating evidence to back efforts to have Pius eventually made a saint.

But the reports of Hitler's contempt for Pius have contrasted with other versions by historians and authors who have depicted Pius as being pro-German and have accused him of intentionally turning a blind eye to the Holocaust.

The Vatican's procedures to put Pius on the road to sainthood have not been slowed or shelved despite concerns from Jews, and they will enter a new phase in March when Vatican historians will begin discussing many volumes of documentation. **Reuters**

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Palestinian militants vow war vs Abbas if crackdown ensues

GAZA CITY—Palestinian militants are sharpening their swords for all-out war against new leader Mahmud Abbas should he translate his condemnation of the armed uprising into a clampdown on anti-Israeli attacks.

In his inauguration speech Saturday, Abbas vowed to seek a mutual ceasefire with Israel to end the vicious circle of violence and said Palestinian attacks "do not help bring about the calm needed to enable a credible, serious peace process."

However, Abbas is under huge pressure from Israel to institute a

formal crackdown on militant groups such as those behind an attack on a border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel in which six Israelis were killed on Thursday.

He is to meet with Hamas and Islamic Jihad Monday in hopes of winning their agreement for a ceasefire with Israel—a move both groups have said they oppose.

Hardened fighters who weave through life eluding Israeli assassination or capture, say they are prepared to work with Abbas after his swearing in, but not if he turns into a lapdog of Israeli

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

"We will fight him if he even so much as thinks about fighting against the resistance and helping Sharon," said Abu Hafsa, a leader in the armed wing of the Islamist group Hamas, sheltering in a Gaza safe house.

The battle lines were drawn up when longtime moderate Abbas used his election campaign to repeatedly rebuke militants for launching rocket attacks against Israel and blindly fanning the flames of violence.

"This fight will continue forever," added the unemployed 30-year-old

who was recruited into the Ezze-dine al-Qassam Brigades at 14.

Militants castigated Abbas for what they saw as an warranted assault on the sanctity of resistance and the most effective weapon in their arsenal.

Fighters with years of rockets under their belts say they have netted the largest victory of the Palestinian struggle, namely Sharon's plan to haul Israeli settlers and troops out of Gaza within 12 months.

"It will be the biggest victory and it won't be the last. It has merely increased our ambition to liberate more places," said Abu Hafsa. AFP



MIAMI ART DECO

A tourist looks at a statue during the art festival "Art and Deco Week," in South Beach, Miami, Jan. 15. The festival was started in 1976 by the Miami Design Preservation League to attract visitors and to help raise awareness and appreciation for Miami Beach's Art Deco Historic District.

REUTERS

Russian forces foil 'another Beslan'

MOSCOW—Russian security forces Sunday combed through the scene of an hours-long gun-battle with suspected pro-Chechen rebels in a southern republic who were reportedly preparing a terror attack like the Beslan school hostage-taking.

Heavily armed special forces accompanied by bomb disposal experts and sniffer dogs searched the ruins of a two-story house near the capital of Dagestan, Makhachkala, where five militants were holed up for 15 hours Saturday, NTV television reported.

The head of the FSB security service in Dagestan, Nikolai Gryaznov, said the siege and a separate assault on rebels hiding in a house in Kaspiysk on the Caspian Sea—in which a total of four Russian troops died—had averted a major terror act.

"The bandits destroyed in Kaspiysk and Makhachkala were preparing a terrorist act similar to Beslan," the Interfax news agency quoted Gryaznov as saying.

"We made use of intelligence information, carried out dozens of raids and searches. This allowed us to corner the criminal group preparing terrorist acts," he said.

Almost 350 people—half of them children—were killed after gunmen linked to the independence war in Chechnya took over a school in the southern town of Beslan in September.

A member of the Russian parliament from Dagestan told journalists that the militants had also planned to seize a school.

"It was the same plan as Beslan, they were preparing to

seize a school," lawmaker Gadzhi Makachev told the NTV channel.

The siege near Makhachkala began when a police patrol came across armed rebels in the street late Friday. The gang barricaded themselves in the house but later released them.

NTV showed pictures of special forces with armored vehicles firing anti-tank rockets at a burning building, which was leveled to the ground by a tank.

The five gunmen, who had taken refuge in the basement, stopped returning fire by late evening Saturday, and there was no sign of them when a search started at dawn although officials said the bodies could be buried under the rubble.

A spokesperson for the Dagestan interior ministry, Abdul Musayev, said that during the operation in Kaspiysk two men had been arrested and a Dagestan rebel leader identified as Mogomedzagir Akayev had been killed.

Security forces in the small Caucasus republics which border war-torn breakaway Chechnya have been placed on high alert in recent weeks amid growing activity by pro-Chechen militants.

Earlier this month, some 150 security forces surrounded a house in the suburbs of the main Ingush city of Nazran, and killed four suspected rebels, who had refused to surrender, after a four-hour gun battle.

The Chechen conflict spilled over into Ingushetia and other republics of the region last year, climaxing in September's bloody seizure of a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, by gunmen said to include Chechens and Ingush. AFP

70M Arabs still can't read or write, league reports

TUNIS—Although illiteracy rates are generally falling in Arab countries, rising populations mean that the total numbers of people unable to either read or write continue to increase, an Arab League body devoted to education and culture said on Sunday.

The report, by the Arab League Education, Science and Culture Organization (Alesco) said that some 70 million people aged over 15 in League member countries were illiterate.

It also said that almost half of all women in the countries concerned—46.5 percent—were unable to read or

write, as against a rate of 25.1 percent amongst men.

The report noted, however, that as a percentage of total populations, the number of illiterates had fallen over the past 35 years.

The overall rate had stood at 73 percent in 1970, but it was now down less than half of that proportion, to 35.6 percent, the report said.

In absolute numbers, however, there were some 50 million illiterates in 1970, as against 70 million today.

Alesco, which is based in the Tunisian capital, is part of the Arab League, which has its headquarters in Cairo. AFP

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A new dawn?

EX-PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada returned from Hong Kong on Saturday with new, titanium knees and old, leaden rhetoric. His 19 days in the former Crown Colony, he said, had given him strength of will and clarity of vision. To do what, precisely? "To unite the people and set the path for them to see a new dawn."

A new beginning? Apparently, Estrada did not only undergo knee surgery; he also had a heart transplant. How else explain his change of heart? After whooping it up in Hong Kong as if there were no tomorrow, he is now ready for the rigors and rapture of the Second Coming.

"I have returned as promised to fulfill a sacred covenant with our people. I have returned to the country and the Filipino people whom I love, stronger, and more determined than ever to restore hope that has been lost; to fight for a better future; uphold the Constitution and restore the rule of law," Estrada said.

This is phrased to appeal to everyone, perhaps as a basis for "uniting the people." But the last four clauses are all code for undoing the work of People Power II, including the unanimous rulings of the Supreme Court in 2001. To address only one of Estrada's key assumptions: The rule of law has in fact already been restored, precisely through People Power II and the key events that followed. The rupture took place when the criminal game of *jueteng* was centralized in Malacañang during his term; the repair proceeded furiously when he was arrested and made to account for his conduct.

But we have already gone through this; the country has already come to terms with People Power II and its aftermath. Any attempt to restart the debate by recasting its terms does not herald a new dawn, but a return to old, discredited ways.

"My unconstitutional removal from the presidency in January 2001, as history shows, had clearly opened a Pandora's Box: One that contained social divisiveness as the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen; hope has been lost, being transformed into disillusionment on promises made, but not kept by the de facto administration."

Estrada seeks to place the blame for the political turmoil that followed his ouster on those who deposed him. But in truth it was he who turned the key in the lock of Pandora's Box. When he toyed with presidential privilege, to the point of running a criminal enterprise from the Palace, he did not take into account the people's absolute unwillingness to suffer another corrupt president.

It is true that a sense of drift seems to mark the national polity. It is also true that the gap between social classes seems to be widening. But any attempt to politicize this divide, by an ex-president who was the first to run for office on class politics, will not guarantee a new dawn, but a return to old, discredited ways.

Is Estrada promising his own brand of people power? He sees equivalence between the charges against him and what he describes as "the unrestrained corruption in all branches and levels of government." He also places special emphasis on the Arroyo administration's dismal survey numbers.

But, on the other hand, he has been categorical about not joining any destabilization attempts. And there is also this crucial sentence in his arrival statement: "I have returned to do what the Constitution has tasked me to do in June 1998."

This is the sentence that has given some of his supporters clammy hands and sudden palpitations. On June 30, 1998, Estrada was sworn into office as the country's 13th president. What the Constitution tasked him to do that fateful month, therefore, was the honorable discharge of his duties as president. Does the statement mean that he still considers himself the rightful president?

Despite his pointed insult about a "de facto" government, even Estrada cannot avoid the terminal fact. The six-year term he was elected to expired in June 2004.

The sentence, therefore, and thus the entire statement, can be read as a tantalizing hint about running again. Estrada may believe that the legal consensus on whether he can run for president again is still fluid. We can be sure that he will test the waters. He will call it a new dawn, but we only see a return to the old and discredited.



To catch a thief

As I SEE IT



Neal H. Cruz

of a heart attack and was to be buried in his hometown in California.

But the Movie Production Code then in force mandated that no movie should show that crime pays. So the gang must not be allowed to get away with the fruits of its crime. (That was the same reason the gold dust so painstakingly gathered by Humphrey Bogart and his cohorts in the classic "Treasure of Sierra Madre," was blown away by a dust storm.) So while they were waiting in the chapel for the coffin to be taken away, the widow of the deceased—with-out their knowing it—gave permission to have the corpse cremated right there. The loot was cremated along with the corpse.

The remake (with George Clooney as Danny Ocean) did not have this ironic and humorous ending. Ocean's eleven got away with the loot. It was a box-office hit anyway, largely because of the technological gizmos they had to overcome. So it was inevitable that a sequel would be made. That sequel is "Ocean's Twelve," now showing in movie houses.

The makers of the sequel must have realized that among the appeals of the original were its tongue-in-cheek humor and the lighthearted banter among the cast. So they did the same thing with the new version. The cast obviously was on a lark while making the movie, same as the Rat Pack when they made the original (which was so successful Sinatra made several other movies using the Rat Pack).

Also like the original, the producers packed the cast with stars (besides Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Andy Garcia, Julia Roberts, Catherine Zeta-Jones, etc.). Bruce Willis ap-

peared in a cameo role—although his name, does not appear in the credits—as did Shirley Maclaine and George Raft in the original. (Sinatra should have cast Humphrey Bogart, original founder of the Rat Pack, in the original, with Lauren Bacall as his gun moll—but was he already dead when the movie was made?)

And like the original, the sequel also ended with a twist, except that the twist was forced and appeared like a cop-out. After piling up problems for the gang early in the movie, it seemed that the writers did not know how to provide the solutions and to end the movie. So they resorted to a simple cliché.

To illustrate this point, I am sorry I have to reveal a part of the plot, but it is not important anyway for the enjoyment of the movie. To begin with, Danny's gang had to do another job because the Andy Garcia character, the casino owner they robbed in the remake, demanded that they return the loot, with interest, or else....

For a change of scenery, the locale was moved to Europe. And the caper was complicated by an experienced French detective hot on their heels and a crafty thief who challenged Danny to see who of them was the better thief.

Toward the end, all the gang members were arrested by the French police, largely through the efforts of Zeta-Jones. The other master thief told Clooney and Roberts how he stole the prize himself, proving he was the better thief. And here is the twist that made the ending look like a cop-out.

In a flashback, Danny was shown telling his rival that what the latter had stolen was a mere replica; and that he, Danny, had stolen the genuine prize by the simple and hackneyed expedient of switching backpacks with the courier, while his cohorts created a diversion by creating a rumble inside a train coach. Besides, Danny's gang had an informer in the person of Zeta-Jones' long-lost father. Compared to Danny's gang of twelve, the other thief was all alone, and yet he was able to steal the replica. So he was still the better thief.

Not so fast

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



when she launched a broadside against ABS-CBN last December. If the network believed in its coverage of FPJ during the elections—or non-coverage of him, it virtually shut him out—it should have stuck by its guns. It should have continued to ignore him in death as it did in life. Certainly, it should not have gone on to advertise its abiding friendship for, solidarity with, and faith in the man as he lay in his coffin in Sto. Domingo, laid low—if his loved ones were to be believed—by a dagger the giant network had plunged in his back. It was a little cheeky, and invited trouble.

But in her tirade, Roces did not drive the network away, saying it had no business covering the wake, it was an interloper come to trespass on the dignity of the dead. She did not ask her followers, or those of her husband, to boycott the network. She did not warn the station to shape up, or see things her way, or face the consequences of their refusal. She merely unburdened herself of her oppression after the network itself solicited her own views on life and death. Even in wrath, she looked, well, presidential.

There's nothing presidential in Erap's reaction. I made my position clear on this a long time ago when Erap put the muscle on the Manila Times and the INQUIRER for railing at his misrule. The Times he managed to close, the INQUIRER he managed to deprive of income from lost advertisement. I said then and I say now that none of the faults of the media may justify coercive action against them by the administration or the opposition, by public officials or various interest groups.

At the very least, that is so because if the media are biased, even more so are the public offi-

cial and various interest groups. They proceed from their own agenda. To make them the arbiter of what is fair or unfair in media is to open the floodgates to oppression. I remember that shortly after Erap crowed about what he did to the Manila Times and the INQUIRER, several local officials said they too had been victims of the provincial media and were bent on taking similar actions against them. The reign of a bad press is worlds better than the reign of tyranny.

At the very most that is so because the abuse of press freedom is not solved by the removal of press freedom. The media's propensity to sensationalize and to trivialize is not solved by censorship, or worse terrorism. If the opposition can approve of an ABS-CBN van being gutted, on the ground that the network did them a bad turn, so can government, with respect to another media outfit, on the ground that it did them a bad turn. That should spell the end of a free press as we know it.

I agree that the media can often be abusive—I find my day wrecked each time I listen to some TV personalities—but terrorizing them into enlightenment is a cure worse than the disease. Their being led to the path of enlightenment doesn't happen that way. It only makes them more pliant to carrot and stick. Fortunately, the public isn't completely powerless to do anything about media's faults. The nice thing about a free press is that you have a choice. You can always choose to buy another newspaper or switch to another station. Or if you yourself, have a burning thought you have to unburden yourself with, you can always unburden it on a newspaper or network that is more hospitable to it.

I've always thought media audiences have a capacity to grow and become more discerning. As evidenced by the way brainless media fare is losing out to more intelligent ones, whether in news or entertainment, in reportage or sitcom. But whether that is so or not, you don't solve abuse by committing a worse one.

You don't produce responsibility that way; you produce anarchy.

Time to resolve airport mess

FORMER PRESIDENT Estrada planned in from Hong Kong last Saturday afternoon and was immediately whisked by chopper to his Tanay rest-house without any untoward incident, thank God. His followers proved to be disciplined, and if the number of policemen deployed to protect him looked like an overkill, we can only agree with PNP Chief Edgar Aglipay: Better to be "overzealous" than to regret later. As Erap buckles down to post-operation therapy in Tanay's cool clime, things ought to pipe down in the opposition camp. His lawyers ought to prepare for the resumption of his much-delayed trial, just as Sandiganbayan Justice Eriberto Sandoval should also forget his hurt from not having been appointed court chief.

The US government has issued a new advisory to its citizens against visiting the Philippines. But over the past two weeks, Americans and other foreign nationals have been coming to this country in unprecedented droves, in the wake of the tsunami that destroyed famous resorts in Asia. Many foreign tourists were re-booked by their travel agencies to Boracay, Cebu, Palawan, Davao and other RP tourist spots. Interviewed over radio, some of them said they never realized how beautiful the Philippines is until they got here. They were also quite happy about the tight security in those resorts.

As I have said, our tourist spots are second to none in Asia in terms of beauty, but much has to be done by way of infrastructure development and security to promote them. The recent influx of tourists should be a good break for us, and the government and private sector travel people should get cranking with those infrastructures as well as promotions.

Paging Dr. Joe de Venecia—he's got a patient in distress: Naia 3. Philippine Star's Carmen Pedrosa wrote about how the foreign airline operators are hoping the legendary negotiator can find a win-win solution to the Naia 3 controversy. JDV is reportedly brokering talks between the administration and Piatco-Fraport, and we can only pray that he'll find a formula where both sides end up with something.

TO SAY that we are now a garrison state is stating the obvious. But it is well for us to remember this phrase from Ninoy Aquino. Metro Manila is under siege.

Hardly a week passes that we don't have a high-ranking police officer guesting on TV, telling us that a red alert status has been raised or lowered, for whatever reason. There is always a bomb discovered or a bomb scare, at the least, somewhere. "Intelligence reports" about this and that "destabilization plot" are too frequent for comfort. Any gathering of a large number of people, and we see footage of battle-ready PNP and AFP troops—reportedly thousands of them—ready for deployment, looking so dead serious you'd think there is an impending foreign invasion.

Who could forget that fortress of shipping containers in front of Malacañang even as over a thousand policemen were deployed during the funeral procession of Fernando Poe Jr.?

Even the annual procession of the Nazareno was not spared from this deployment overkill, complete with sniffing dogs!

Then, a day after FPJ's widow filed a petition to replace her late husband in pursuing his electoral protest, an ABS-CBN OB van was attacked and burned with a molotov bomb, purportedly by a group of FPJ's supporters.

While the incident was obviously meant to discredit Susan Roces (who, in a TV interview during FPJ's wake, had angrily complained about what she described as ABS-CBN's unfair coverage of his campaign), there was this raid on the Islamic library and praying center, which was conducted during Friday prayers. At the very least, the raid was diabolically malicious in its timing and justification.

Which prompted a friend from those years of living very dangerously to send a text message: "Don't all these remind you of the DDT? Has it been resurrected already?"

We belong to a generation that was forced by circumstances to develop very good memories. We lived through a time when you had to keep most things to yourself, or you could publish and perish. At a time when even a handwritten note gone astray could be your warrant of arrest, the safest

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



The government has announced that it is moving into Naia 3 by virtue of its awesome expropriation powers. In this, it has the support of the different foreign chambers of commerce. But they are clear on one thing: the government has to justly recompense the builders. The government did not spend a single centavo for Naia 3. It was Piatco and Fraport that built it. But as Sen. Manuel Villar pointed out, the government has no money to pay them. It's obviously trying to postpone that obligation by saying it will pay the builders the proper amount, as determined by the court, but not the \$62-million down payment ordered by the Pasay court.

The Supreme Court has issued a TRO against the lower court's verdict, thus encouraging the government to go ahead and operate Naia 3. Part of readiness is to get the foreign airlines to move into the terminal and prepare to use it, but the airlines are hesitant. Transferring to Naia 3 would entail a lot of money, and yet the airlines could end up frozen in their tracks by an adverse court here or abroad.

At this point, however, the time for finger-pointing is over. I'm glad to note that Piatco lawyer Liway Chato now acknowledges that her client may have its share of the blame. It's time to put expert heads together to find a rational solution in the national interest, so that Naia 3 can be opened by June this year, as promised by airport chief Chief Alfonso Cusi. But government cannot continue acting like a tyrannical despot, and the Piatco people have to subsume the profit motive to patriotism. I'm

sure the solution is just around the corner.

Speaker De Venecia recently hosted a dinner for visiting Japanese political leader and statesman Taro Nakayama at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. It was the first time JDV hosted such dinner outside his Dasmarinas Village home. Before his residence burned down last December, JDV used to have all those dinners at his home as they were cheaper and more congenial that way. His home had seen some of the world's top leaders.

It was also JDV's first public appearance since he returned from a brief vacation in Spain with wife Gina and son Christopher, after the tragedy that claimed the life of their 16-year-old daughter. We chatted briefly with him after the dinner and he said, "Masakit pa rin dito," pointing to his heart. But he knows that life for him and Gina has to go on, and that he can ease his grief by immersing himself in several peace initiatives, for which God has equipped him with the needed talents.

In his extemporaneous remarks, JDV was in fine form once more as he paid tribute to the vision of Nakayama, who once headed the committee on constitutional reforms in the Japanese Diet. JDV noted how Nakayama, who traveled to Central Luzon in 1991 to distribute relief goods for the Pinatubo victims, continues to assert his voice on contemporary issues, such as in proposing for Japan to agree to postponing the debt payments of tsunami-hit nations. JDV also reiterated to Nakayama GMA's request to Prime Minister Koizumi about putting in place a new RP-Japan partnership in the field of health care, especially for aging Japanese citizens, even as RP's entertainment sector will be gradually phased out there.

What's not known is that JDV and Nakayama have so much in common. The Japanese leader got the warring leaders of Cambodia to come to the conference table in the early '90s. This paved the way for the peace, uneasy though it was, that led to the UN-supervised elections in that country in 1993 and the rise of Hun Sen to power.

Under siege by DDT

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa



place to keep a diary or journal was your mind.

And so we had to remember, as much as we could. Names, dates, places, faces, reasons. When, where, how, why, who was picked up, "salvaged," found buried in a shallow grave, or simply disappeared; how many have been massacred. It was weird how "Try To Remember" from the Broadway musical "The Fantastiks" became our song.

But most of all, we had to remember how the "department of dirty tricks" or DDT went about its business. To piece together the pronouncements and the developments as they came, to be able, at least, to make sense of the "scenario" that was being played out and anticipate the conclusion, which was usually deadly.

Nonetheless, through much repetition and probably because of the dwindling creativity of its functionaries—whom we imagined to belong to a highly specialized elite but shadowy group within the Marcos propaganda machinery—the DDT pattern soon became familiar. That was probably why Aquino was able to predict, with startling accuracy, that "it may be all over in a few minutes."

Earlier I had replied to my friend's text message: "Since the elections. Remember that 'assassination attempt' on PPJ by the NPA daw?"

A replay of the Friday edition of the ABS-CBN news on ANC showed the pattern again: intelligence reports of an assassination attempt on ousted President Estrada on his return from Hong Kong.

But when the PNP chief gallantly promised that he himself would bring Estrada home on a helicopter ride and that he was willing to risk being assassinated along with the former presi-

dent—while down below thousands of his men would be deployed to keep the welcoming crowd from marching to Malacañang—I knew for certain that the DDT was alive and very unwell.

Even as our daily struggle to survive is becoming too difficult to bear with every additional burden that the government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo imposes on us almost on a daily basis, we are trapped in this insidious culture of fear, under siege by the DDT.

The only seemingly bright thing in this desolate landscape is the ongoing "Forum for the Future of the Filipino." I say "seemingly" because while the integrity of the organizers and the participants, and the sincerity of their intentions are unassailable, the crucial question was asked by ANC's Ces Drilon: how do we translate all these to the general populace?

Still, given the tremendous resources in terms of knowledge, expertise and creativity available to the organizers, the problem of communication can be resolved with a willingness to traverse from the realm of the ideal to the pragmatic; from a distant vision of the "future" to the here and now, with the urgency of a rescue team.

But more crucial than that is receptivity. Will the policies, plans and programs that may result from this forum provide the inspiration and the impetus for collective endeavor?

Tragically for us, this is an administration whose credibility has sunk to rock bottom. Even if on the clearest day of the year Ms Arroyo declares that the sky is blue, we would still be convinced that we are suffering from an optical illusion.

It is an administration totally dissipated of energy, after the entire three and a half years of its first term was expended to ensure Ms Arroyo would get elected; and during the first six months of its second term, it is an administration that has been immobilized by fear of being found out as to how she got elected.

Under the old Constitution, the number of years that she's been in Malacañang sums up to a full term for a president. Enough.

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Divided loyalties

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



al intentions. Additional testimony by Molina helps us appraise Laurel.

Molina recounts that Laurel, at first, had the tact not to live in Malacañang when he became President. He held office there, but continued to live in his house on Peñafrancia Street, Paco. However, the Laurel residence was guarded by a detachment of the presidential guards. Molina writes:

"Since my house was but a few steps from that of President Laurel, I [had to pass by it daily on the way to] the tramway station. My daily work schedule coincided with the change of the guards. At a prudent distance, I always stopped to watch it and because no one was allowed to pass by during [the ceremony].

"But the true reason to halt on said occasions was to learn of the latest war news. Indeed, infallibly, upon the change of guards, the outgoing guards informed the incoming, in Tagalog: 'All is quiet, save that, according to the latest news from radio San Francisco....'

"And they proceeded to relay the different activities of the American forces in the diverse war fronts. It was obvious the Japanese officer didn't understand our native language."

In Molina's view, "This seemed to strengthen the general belief that Laurel was masterfully playing his hand vis-à-vis the Japanese...."

Molina's remaining doubts about Laurel's patriotism were banished when Laurel announced the declaration of a state of war with the United States. Molina pointed out two things: In the first place, this proclamation of Laurel was simply a declaration of fact and was far from what the

Japanese wanted—and void, too, because Laurel made no effort to have the proclamation ratified by the National Assembly; most of all, Laurel refused to authorize the conscription of Filipinos to fight for Japan.

In the case of Roxas, the only one of the pre-war Big Three left in the Philippines, people looked up to him for leadership and cues on how to deal with the Japanese. He decided to be discreet, evading opportunities for cooperation by citing his weak heart. This didn't stop his colleagues from accusing him, after the war, of having been a Japanese collaborator. And they were disappointed and outraged to hear the Americans' announcement that they had "liberated" Roxas.

Jorge Vargas (in his diary entry, Sugamo Prison, April 9, 1946), reacting to the conviction of Teofilo Sison by the People's Court, articulates the bitterness of those jailed while Roxas was set free: "...every Filipino who remained alive up to the liberation and did as much as talk to any Japanese; every barber who cut Japanese hair; every *cochero* who carried a Japanese soldier from one place to another; every Filipino woman who danced with a Japanese soldier; or served him food at any place; every farmer who allowed the Japanese to take away his *palay*; in fact, every Filipino who did anything at all, including accepting and passing Japanese military scrip, unless he did any of these things at the point of a gun or bayonet, was a traitor. This makes everybody a traitor, including the judges themselves, except... those who were in the good old USA, or were able to run away thereto after December 1941. This makes Confesor and every guerrillero a traitor because they certainly handled Japanese money at one time or another. What a fantastic result of Japanese aggression! It makes the Philippines both 100 percent pro-American and 100 percent Japanese collaborators!"

A final note: read Jesus Villamor's memoirs, which recounts the in-fighting among the guerrillas in appalling detail.

Religious label

IN REPORTING the news, journalists are expected to keep their prejudices to themselves. What the reporters saw, read or heard—not their opinion—is what matters to the readers.

A reader, Ayesha Osop of Mindanao State University in General Santos City, felt the INQUIRER fell short of this expectation when it published last Jan. 10 the news about the well-attended procession of the statue of Jesus Christ at the Quiapo Church, more popularly known as the Black Nazarene.

Bearing the headline "Faith proves stronger than fear in Quiapo," the first paragraph of this front-page news read: "Not even police claims about a supposed Islamic bomb plot could hold back the massive human tide."

Two days before the procession, the Philippine National Police reported that it arrested 16 alleged Islamic militants who had plotted to strap bombs on their bodies and detonate them during the religious rite.

The phrase "Islamic bomb" rankled the reader. She wrote: "The word 'Islamic' to refer to 'the bomb' is an insult to the Islamic community. It manifests the writers' ignorance of the word 'Islamic'. If they knew its true meaning, they wouldn't dare use it to refer to something that has an apparent negative connotation."

"If the writers argue that based on current stories, Islamic militants normally wage acts of terrorism—like Bin Laden and the Abu Sayyaf—then it shows their ignorance. I am a practicing Muslim and, on behalf of the Islamic community, we condemn terrorism in any form. You can hear these cries in the marches of progressive Muslim militants and protesters in the streets."

PNP report

"If it's not ignorance, then it shows PREJUDICE. If the intention was to discriminate against Muslims by attaching the word Islamic to something that kills, something that destroys, then it only serves to provoke the Christian community to hate the Muslims."

"When President Estrada was ousted from office, you did not hear the Muslim say that a corrupt Christian president is finally out of power. When President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo supported the war against terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq, you did not hear people say that the female Christian president went all out to support the Christian US President Bush on his Christian war against Islamic terror."

When informed about the complaint, the person who wrote the phrase in question explained that there was no intention on his part to allude to the reader's religion when he used the word "Islamic."

He said the description was made on the basis of the claim of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group that the alleged plotters were "members of a group of Islamic converts with supposed ties to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and Jemaah Islamiyah."

He went on to emphasize that if the alleged plotters were a group of Christians, he would have probably referred to the plot as a "Christian right-wing bomb" plot, without alluding to Jesus Christ.

The writer expressed his regrets for the discomfort that the phrase has caused to some people.

Sensitivity

I was not surprised by the reader's strong protest over the use of the name of her religion to describe an instrument that is meant to injure or kill people. I would have reacted in the same way if a bomb that explodes in a place populated by Muslims were labeled as a "Christian bomb."

It is unfortunate that, for years, some media outlets have unfairly treated our Muslim brothers. When a crime suspect happens to be a Muslim, that fact is emphasized in police and media reports. But hardly do we read or hear about a person accused of a crime who belongs to the Christian faith identified by his religion. All that will be written about him is his name and address.

I do not see the logic in attaching the name of the religion of a person to the explosive device that he may have made. When India, a Hindu-dominated country, successfully tested an atomic bomb some time ago, a United States-based newspaper described it as a "Hindu A-bomb." A week later, India's neighbor, Pakistan followed suit. The same newspaper was quick to name it an "Islamic A-bomb," an obvious reference to the religion of most Pakistanis.

I have yet to read a newspaper written in English call a bomb manufactured in the United States or other arms-producing countries in the West a "Christian bomb"; or use any word that gives a clue about its origin. It is as if there is nothing to be worried about a bomb that comes from those countries, unlike a bomb that is sourced from Hindus, Muslims or other people who do not belong to the First World.

Going back to the complained news report about the "Islamic bomb," I believe it was wrong for the PNP to associate the explosive materials allegedly seized from the suspects to their religion; in the first place, the description was uncalled for; secondly, there was no showing that the explosive materials were to be used to pursue some religious objectives.

In fact, a few days later, the PNP released the suspects—except for two—for lack of evidence that would link them to the alleged plan to bomb the Black Nazarene procession.

I think the PNP report on the alleged bomb plot could have been written without any allusion to the religion of their purported conspirators, and the absence of the word "Islamic" would not have made any difference in the reader's appreciation of that report.

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascarido Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or reader-sadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

THEY SAID

Loveless opposition

"I am asking Edong (Angara) and Ping (Lacson)—they may not love one another—to please stay put with the minority and vote for the interests and rights of the people."

—Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., calling on the two opposition senators to work together

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Double standard of justice in the Philippines

I AGREE with the editorial "Forgiveness" (PDI 1/6/05): There is a double standard of justice in this country. You said it right: "...the prisoners of impoverished means, including dissidents who should have known freedom long ago, die slowly in miserable conditions behind bars."

It's outrageous and absurd that big plunderers, human rights violators and corrupt government officials are accorded lenient treatment in our land while ordinary detainees and prisoners are denied of their appeal for compassion.

Last September 2004, a fellow inmate died of cervical cancer. Two months before her demise, we peti-

tioned the local court to release Carmela Candelario on humanitarian grounds. She was terminally ill. Her last days could have been spent with her two daughters and mother in Surigao del Sur. Our petition was denied. Sadly, she died three days before the next hearing of her case. Due to poverty, her family was unable even to pay her their last respects.

Last Oct. 21, 2004, Norberto Botalon, 44, an NPA guerrilla fighter from Sorsogon, died in the Intensive Care Unit of the National Bilibid Prisons Hospital after suffering from severe diarrhea and mental disorder. He died of cardio-respiratory arrest secondary to typhoid fever. He, together with two others (Ar-

mando Vidar and Sonny Marbella), was meted out the death penalty for robbery with homicide and transferred to the NBP's death row on Sept. 26, 2004. The Council of Health and Development (CHD) doctors who wanted to visit him at the NBP on Oct. 11 were denied entry by the guards. He was dehydrated due to severe diarrhea, an evidence of government's neglect of the prisoner's health.

A medical examination requested for political prisoner Edgardo Sacamay, who was manhandled and maltreated by the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center (CPDRC) administration for leading a prison protest on Dec. 17, 2004, was denied. According to

Karapatan-Cebu, "the 1,300 detention prisoners of CPDRC launched the protest on the eve of Dec. 26 due to the denial of their visitatorial rights by the newly appointed warden, upon the order of the governor. The prisoners had also demanded 'humanization of their rations,' which are not 'fit for animals to eat.'"

Even the political prisoners, whose release the Supreme Court has ordered, continue to be imprisoned.

I salute Gabriela, a militant women's alliance, and E-Just (Equal Justice for All Movement) which have courageously exposed the "campaign for Jalosjos pardon as part of an exchange deal between [President Macapagal] Arroyo and Jalos-



jos' influential family in Congress."

It seems forgiveness is one of Malacañang's latest tricks for its old friends and forgetfulness for its enemies. How easily the government has forgotten the agreements it signed in 2001 with the National Democratic Front negotiating panel on the release of political prisoners.

—EDUARDO R. SERRANO,
political prisoner,
Oriental Mindoro Provincial Jail,
Calapan City

Your donation will give you a book and song on the Infanta we want to restore

A book entitled "Infanta: Passage to the Pacific," published by BPI Foundation together with the Doña Isabel Garcia y Fernandez Trust Fund, and a CD of an original song, "Alaala Ka, Infanta," will go to donors to the flood victims there.

The book shows a town that deserves to be restored and rehabilitated. Authors include Conrad de Quiros, Ciel Habito, Fr. Francis Lucas, Babeth Lolarga, Annie Feleo, Mickey Fenix Makabenta and Art Cariaga. Outstanding photos are by Emil Davocol and Rey Lazo. The song is by Noel Cabangon.

BPI Foundation Executive Director Roni Tapa-Merk will course the donations through Fr. Lucas, president of the Infanta Integrated Community Development Assistance Inc. (ICDAI) and president of the Catholic Media Network.

A copy of the book and a CD will be given free for every P3,000.00 cash donation. Individuals, office colleagues or families may choose to pool their donations to entitle them to the book and CD.

This campaign is supported by the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

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5th Floor, BPI Main Building
Ayala Ave. corner Paseo de Roxas
Legazpi Village, Makati City



Different Greatways

THIS refers to the INQUIRER's news item headlined "Task force rescues 15 jobseekers" (PDI, 1/11/05), which stated that the victims were rescued last Jan. 4 during a raid on the office of Greatways Manpower International Corp. at 2028 Ligaya St., Sta. Ana, Manila. It also reported the arrest by the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force of a certain Elsa Benagre Bandila, the proprietor of the recruitment firm.

We wish to clarify that our agency, Greatways Manpower International Inc., with principal office at GCS Bldg., 4175 Ponte St., Barangay Tejeros, Makati City, was not in

A multi-pronged initiative

OUR attention was called by an article (PDI, 1/6/05) about the Catholic Church appealing for land donation for the relocation program in Quezon province. The article named the Catholic Church, Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Defense, and the municipal and provincial governments of Quezon as the entities behind the initiative. May we add to the report in the interest of truth.

First of all, the initiative, called "Kalinga Luzon," is part of a multi-sectoral undertaking to rehabilitate the typhoon-struck families in Quezon, Mindoro and Nueva Ecija.

Secondly, our organization, Gawad Kalinga, provides the framework for the resettlement effort. Not that we seek credit for our participation in the undertaking; we just want people to know the effort is bigger and more multi-pronged than what the article suggested.

Thirdly, the article did not mention the par-

'Sardine-like' existence

THERE are more than six billion people inhabiting planet Earth today. According to a group of local economists, all of them could be accommodated on the island of Luzon, with 15 square meters to spare for each.

The economists are probably right in their calculations. And no one, to our knowledge, has come out to dispute their claim. It has to be said though that allotting 15 sq m for each human being would make for a "sardine-like" human existence.

True, there is still plenty of room. Space is not yet the question. The issue is the quality of life, a decent standard of living, which naturally is desired. This can be attained if there is a properly managed population growth. Without it, mass poverty will continue to get worse, becoming more prevalent and widespread. There will be more very young miserable, wretched, mendicant children, their life span shortened by hunger and disease. Life is too brief to be lived in misery. It's painful to say this, but it would be

better if they had not been born.

Natural birth control, the purpose of which is to prevent pregnancy, is not known to be reliable. Medically approved artificial contraceptives, properly applied, are much more dependable.

The irrational intransigence of very learned religious people who are against artificial contraceptives is incomprehensible and dismaying. Perhaps, it may stem from an infallibility complex. Whatever, it must be realized that we have a looming catastrophe already descending on us. It is a live ticking time-bomb which can still be defused if we take the right action now. Need we wait four centuries for the Church to realize and acknowledge its error? Ignoring the problem will create a disastrous man-made tsunami, making Mother Earth a planet of more sorrow.

—VICTOR MURILLO,
658 Maharlika St.,
Plainview 1550,
Mandaluyong City

Performance scorecards for all public officials

I MUST say I liked the INQUIRER's editorial "Exorcising demons" (PDI, 1/7/05) But I think it would be great if the government would come up with a transparent "Performance Management System" for the use of the executive and legislative branches. And it would be even better if such a system were also made to apply to local governments. That way, the people would know if our officials are doing their jobs as they should.

In the private sector, especially among Fortune 500 companies, the use of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is quite common. With BSC, companies and their respective departments, down to their individual employees, establish their respective scorecards which include not only the financial aspect but also the entity's customer management efforts (in the case of the government, maybe approval ratings as opposed to a company's customer satisfaction index), process management (the people deserve to know the way they do things), and learning and growth. (I really wonder if the learning curves of congressmen and senators improve while they are in Congress. Or are they just pretending to be experts in everything that they do? I wonder as much if they read books!)

Each official should have his or her individual scorecards and, at the end of the year, their constituencies (i.e. the people) reasonably deserve to know how the officials had performed vis-à-vis the established scorecards. By carrying out this system, the government would also be educating our people on how to identify performing officials from the grandiloquent traps and the simply incompetent politicians.

Our system of governance needs a major overhaul. Your editorial should jolt our elected government officials into taking the necessary steps in that direction.

—NORMAN TILOS,
Salcedo Village, Makati City,
normantilos@yahoo.com

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VAT hike to cost P256 per family monthly, solon says

LUCENA CITY—Filipino families would shell out an additional P256 on the average per month if Congress pushes through with the VAT hike, militant Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teddy Casiño warned yesterday.

Casiño said Bayan Muna had arrived at the initial computation after dividing the P40-billion revenue target of the VAT bill by the 13 million Filipino families to be affected over a period of 12 months.

"Since the effect of the VAT hike will hit the rich and the poor alike, the average figure is a good starting point to measure the effect of the 20-percent hike," Casiño said in a statement.

The militant lawmaker noted that the current daily cost of living is already P590 for a family of six in the National Capital Region, which the lawmaker said, is

still way above the minimum wage of P300 in Metro Manila.

"Even if Congress legislates a P125 across-the-board increase in wages, minimum wages will still be way below at P425," he stressed.

Casiño explained that while Bayan Muna had supported the workers' call for the P125 across-the-board minimum wage increase for three years now, the computations changed over time, and the proposed wage increase would now be not enough to cover the average Filipino family's expenditures should the VAT bill be approved.

He also echoed studies made by

Ibon Foundation that President Arroyo would face more destabilization attempts this year as Malacañang's net satisfaction rating crashed to a near all-time low.

"At present, there is already a social unrest due to soaring prices of commodities and rabid corruption in government. Malacañang is shooting itself on the foot as it will have to face more unrest should it insist on the VAT bill," he stressed.

Bayan Muna, along with Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and other allied organizations and party-list groups will hold a series of mass actions starting today to protest the VAT bill.

Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said the "indecent haste with which the VAT increase is

being pushed in Congress shows that the Arroyo regime is bent on breaking the Filipino people's backs with a slew of tax measures."

Rosal said that by raising the value-added tax, President Arroyo would only further stoke the flames of the people's anger.

"It might prove to be the last straw that will catalyze the people into undertaking mass actions to put an end to the taxing Arroyo regime," Rosal said.

Despite strong public clamor against the proposed tax hike, Malacañang has not abandoned its plan to impose a two-step increase in the value-added tax as the VAT bill remains a priority target of the Lower House. **Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

2 Germans killed in plane crash

CALAPAN CITY—The pilot and the passenger of a two-seater plane died on the spot when the aircraft crashed at about 7 a.m. yesterday at the Small Lalaguna Cove in Barangay Sabang, Puerto Galera, according to police report.

Senior Supt. Marcos Flores, Oriental Mindoro provincial police director, identified the pilot as Peter Borchars and his passenger Andreas Biesenbach, both German nationals.

Flores said investigators found no passports and other personal identifications at the crash site.

He said the yellow aircraft named Cosmos took off from a resort in Talisay, Batangas but upon reaching the vicinity of Barangay Sabang at around 7 a.m., it crashed at the seawater of Small Lalaguna Cove.

Authorities could not yet tell what caused the crash.

"The wrecked aircraft was taken from the water to the shore by volunteer divers of the Lalaguna Beach Resort and now in the custody of Sunplus Beach Resort management," the police officer added.

Flores said the German Embassy and Borchars' wife had already been informed of the fate of the two German tourists.

An embassy representative and the pilot's wife were expected to arrive last night for proper disposition of the cadavers, which had gone through autopsy by Dr. Rosse Villaroel, Puerto Galera municipal health officer.

The victims' bodies were taken to the Last Trip Funeral parlor at Poblacion, Puerto Galera. **Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau with a report from Christian Esguerra in Manila**

Bishop thanks donors

INFANTA, Quezon—Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona of the calamity-stricken Prelature of Infanta, Quezon and Aurora expressed his gratitude to all donors, especially fellow Bishop Leo Drona of San Pablo, Laguna for helping "alleviate our sufferings and that of our stricken people."

Tirona told the INQUIRER that the nearby San Pablo Diocese, headed by Drona, was among the first donors that extended generously to the badly battered areas of the prelature caused by flash floods and mudslides, which killed and rendered missing almost 2,000 residents.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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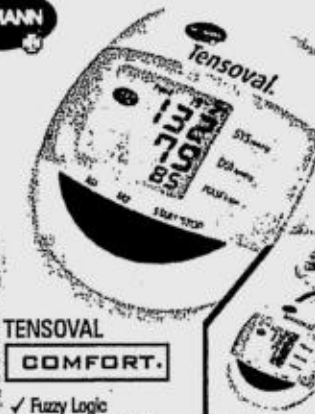
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Liquor license now requires 'blessed' permit in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—Obtaining a liquor license in Baguio now requires "good character," courtesy of a mandatory spirituality-building seminar that will be taught by pastors associated with the city mayor.

Businessmen have opposed an executive order which compels them to undergo a three-hour seminar on "character, smoking, liquor, health and life transformation before any applicant may be allowed to have a permit and pay his taxes."

Mayor Braulio Yaranon issued the directive on Jan. 5, after Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit addressed the meningococemia crisis here.

A government employee said the directive aimed to "deliver the city ... from God's plagues," which was how some local Christian evangelists described the deadly meningitis strain.

The Yaranon administration was earlier criticized for pursuing city policies that were supposedly influenced by evangelists, now working as employees or volunteers in his office.

The order covers enterprises that sell liquor or cigarettes, including sari-sari stores, said Crispio Lagyop, city business licensing officer.

"That's roughly 6,000 enterprises or 60 percent of those renewing their licenses this January," he said.

Yaranon said the order was meant to address peace and order problems that had vic-

timized children.

"(The) ... problem has reached gargantuan proportion, whereby crimes against persons and juvenile delinquencies are due to the rampant operation of so-called sin businesses or vice promoting entertainment centers, such as bars, liquor dispensers, nightclubs, karaoke joints, video or computer centers, billiard halls and the like," the directive said.

The seminars were meant to "gather all operators to appraise them of the gravity of the problem caused by liquor and other vices-promoting establishments," Yaranon told reporters.

Asked if the order had intruded into people's right to religion, the mayor said: "No, this is for the children. There are laws protecting the children. I don't see religion entering the picture here."

Some businessmen disagreed.

"We can cite that [the order's impact on our civil rights] in court, if the government implements the order. We understand the need for [a sense of] spiritual orderliness, but this should be voluntary. We cannot impose someone's else's ethics on accountants, or lawyers, who have their own set of professional ethics, so they should not force their [personal] ethics on businessmen," said Carlos Honorio Estepa, former vice president for North Luzon of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Bishop asks catechists from Baguio for clearance on meningococemia

LEGAZPI CITY—The 27 catechists who were initially barred from entering their office at the St. Raphael the Archangel Parish Church due to the meningococemia disease scare have already reported for work after securing medical clearance from the city health office.

Sr. Ma. Emelinda Ortiz and the other catechists arrived here Jan. 8 after attending a six-day annual retreat in Baguio City.

They were, however, shocked to find a note requiring them to seek medical clearance posted on the door of their office.

The note, signed by Bishop Lucilo Quiambao, read: "Nobody may show up to this Pastoral Center until medically clear of meningitis virus (sic)."

"We were stunned by the note but we all immediately complied, since no one has separated from the group yet," Antonio Ranera, one of the catechists, said.

Upon reading the note, the group contacted the city health office and arranged for a

thorough medical check-up that morning.

Dr. Modesto Kapuno, CHO medical officer and one of the doctors who examined the delegates, said the group was immediately checked for any tell-tale signs of meningococemia.

"After physical examination of each of these catechists, they were all found to be negative of meningococemia disease. They did not manifest any of the symptoms like high-grade fever, rashes, vomiting and headache," Kapuno said.

He added that the group was given Rifampicin as preventive measure and each member was told to monitor himself or herself for any of the symptoms of the disease.

Ranera said they were given Ciprofloxacin, a prophylactic antibiotic, by health authorities in Baguio, also as a preventive measure.

The group reported for work on Jan. 11, after Quiambao cleared them. *Jed Ll. Bacason, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



CHAVI Romawac, band leader and drummer, Hannah Romawac, lead singer, Jayvee, Richard and Coy of Session Road jam in Baguio with masks at the height of the meningo scare on Jan. 8. They arrived for a mall tour just in time for the cleaning of their namesake, Session Road, the only main street in downtown Baguio. *EV ESPRITO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU*

Artists' message in free concert: Baguio is safe

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Artists are doing their share to help the city recover from the stigma brought about by meningococemia, the fatal meningitis strain that has been hounding the city in the past three months.

Theater artist Ferdie Balanag said they wanted to show residents and tourists that Baguio is still one of the beautiful places in the country by holding a free concert at the People's Park and giving away free food to those who showed up.

Balanag said they held the "Baguio Come Alive! Bayanihan Tayo (Let us help each other)" project, from Friday until yesterday because artists and businessmen wanted to tap the residents' sense of cooperation by linking art, music and food in one event.

"We want to lift everyone's spirit. In the past few days, people have been hounded by fear and are already afraid to come to Baguio because of meningococemia, so this activity is one way

to counter it," Balanag said.

Visual artist Kawayan de Guia said he appreciated the city's decongestion that resulted from the meningococemia reports.

"But in terms of (meningococemia's) effect on [local] business and [public] health, [I must say] it has its downside. The disease used to be so small and it grew so big. Now, it's making [our] world go around," De Guia said.

At 6 p.m. Friday, close to 100 people, mostly students and professionals, gathered at the People's Park, also called Malcolm Square, in the downtown area.

While waiting for the show to start, officials of the Baguio Association of Hotels and Inns (Bahai) took turns in serving bowls of chopsuey (mixed sautéed vegetables) and bread to the concert goers.

The Baguio Market Vendors Association donated 30 kg each of vegetable ingredient for the chopsuey. "We have been worried at how lowlanders treat our vegetables, saying these were supposedly contaminated with the (meningococemia bacteria).

ROUNDUP

British diver drowns

ILOILO CITY—The body of a British salesman, believed to have been a drowning victim, was found Jan. 5, a day after he disappeared while diving near Boracay Island in Aklan. The body of Anthony Chadwick, 38, was located underwater at about 9:30 a.m. by rescuers led by the Coast Guard along with divers from Boracay, about 500 meters off Barangay Yapak in the northern part of the island, according to the Boracay Special Protection Unit. Chadwick, a telecommunications salesman, disappeared while diving with Brown and two dive masters of the Fish Eye Dive Resort.

Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau

Sayyaf leader slain

ISABELA CITY, Basilan—An Abu Sayyaf leader was killed while a militiaman was wounded in a clash between the bandit group and government troops in Barangay Semut, Tuburan town on Tuesday night. Col. Raymundo Ferrer, 103rd Army Brigade commander, said Tanakalun Lianson was killed in the 15-minute clash. Militiaman Mabod Manalampong was on his way to his group's detachment when he was ambushed by armed men. The wounded Manalampong managed to escape and report the incident to the detachment commander. Troops of the 32nd Infantry Battalion were immediately sent to the area, resulting in the clash. Ferrer said Lianson's group briefly took custody of hostages taken from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan in May 2001. It was also allegedly behind the beheading of several soldiers in 2001.

Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Protection dike damaged

CITY OF CALAPAN—About 300 meters of the protection dike in Silito Buhuan, Barangay Bucayao here was damaged due to a rise in water level. The Task Force Bucayao-Mag-asawang Tubig Rivers Flood Mitigation Project will

rechannel the water and has proposed the construction of a new 400-m dike worth about P4 million. This would prevent flooding like what happened in 33 barangays in October 2001.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Meningo-free Mindoro

CITY OF CALAPAN—There is no meningococemia in Mindoro, claimed Dr. Elsa Alberto, Department of Health-Mindoro representative. Alberto dismissed the story that circulated among residents that a meningo victim was confined in a private hospital here. She added that her office continued to monitor the feared disease and to campaign for its prevention through education.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Sea turtle freed

CITY OF CALAPAN—A green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), about 5 years old, was released in Barangay Fe del Mundo, Mansalay town on Jan. 5. Algen Camo and fellow fishers thought it was a big fish when they found it. The turtle's carapace measures 62 cm by 58 cm. Ebenezer Palmejar, City Environment and Natural Resources Office-Roxas forester, tagged the turtle at the backyard of Councillor Churchill Lomlo.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Teenager nabbed for rape

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Police here arrested a 17-year-old boy for allegedly raping a 3-year-old girl in Barangay Quebiawan on Jan. 5. Investigation showed the alleged rape happened at around 3 p.m. after the girl's mother left her watching television at a neighbor's house. Reports said the suspect came to the house and cuddled the girl while watching television. After a while, the suspect took the girl to a nearby vacant area where he allegedly abused her.

Jun Mallig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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Villagers fear more clashes in Maguindanao

MAMASAPANO, Maguindanao—Close to 6,000 families from nine barangays affected by clashes here were told that it was already safe to go home, but many of them fear more clashes might erupt because of the continued presence of armed groups.

Army Col. Gerry Jalandoni, 604th Infantry Brigade commander, gave the assurance during the visit of Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza, who flew in yesterday with reporters to assess the damage of last week's fighting that left seven soldiers dead.

About 200 Moro guerrillas

overran an Army base, triggering clashes that killed 21 combatants dead, according to a military report on Monday.

Dureza, who distributed 400 sacks of rice to the evacuees, said the latest fighting would not affect the ceasefire and the scheduled peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"The top leadership of MILF had disowned any involvement with the group of Wahid," Dureza said. "Otherwise, it would have been different."

Military officials said 3,500

families from Barangays Linantangan, Takanalipao, Duguenged and Pinbalaan had sought refuge in elementary school buildings in Nabundasan, Kuloy and Mamasapano.

More than 2,300 more families from the surrounding villages of Dasikul, Bagumbong, Daladap, Pisao and Dabawayan were also affected.

Jalandoni told the residents that the area was already safe.

"We're only giving you the rice as pabaon, sa pag-uwi ninyo (in going home)," said Dureza, after the military assured them that the area had been cleared.

He added that Wahid was no longer capable of attacking more military detachments in the area because he was already on the run.

But farmers from Barangay Lupok, who fled to Barangay Kuloy, said they were still afraid to go back to their village.

A farmer said the forces of Wahid were still very much around.

Jainudin Abutasil, provincial board member, confirmed that some houses were hit during the exchange of gunfire. Although the armed clashes have stopped, the rebels are still in

the area, he claimed.

According to Jalandoni, some 2,500 MILF fighters belonging to the 104th and 106th guerrilla base commands operate in the area, but Wahid's group mustered the support of only 600 fighters.

He said the attacks were launched while the 37th IB based in Mamasapano was swapping troops with the 64th IB base in Camp Abubakar.

There were initial delays in the arrival of the 64th IB soldiers. Wahid's forces took advantage of those weaknesses.

"Initially, they planned to at-

tack our battalion but when they saw the mobile forces we installed along the highways, they backed out. Instead, they attacked our detachment, where only nine soldiers were left," Jalandoni said.

Residents of Luboc said a woman died while giving birth while some of the houses in the community were damaged at the height of the evacuation last week.

Provincial public health nurse Eileen de Asis said over 1,000 of the evacuees were suffering from various ailments. *Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Dumaguete university to accept medical students on scholarship

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The state-run university here will be opening its doors to medical students sponsored by local governments as part of its campaign to address the increasing scarcity of doctors, particularly in the provinces.

Henry A. Sojor, president of the Negros Oriental State University (Norsu), said the university is now talking to local government officials to sponsor a scholarship for students taking up medicine.

"I have been and will be talking to the governor, mayors and members of different local legislative bodies in (Negros Oriental). So far, the initial response was quite positive," Sojor said.

Norsu, formerly the Central Visayas Polytechnic College (CVPC), became a university last year and will be opening its college of medicine next school year.

Sojor said he had proposed that the scholars, when they finally be-

come doctors, would have to render at least two years of service in the local government units that sponsored their scholarship.

He said that if the 20 towns and five cities in Negros Oriental would sponsor at least two scholars each, Norsu would have a viable number of medical enrollees and soon the province will have more doctors.

He said Norsu had been scouting for "the best professors" for its medical college and would offer tuition that would just be a third of the fees collected by other medical schools in Central Visayas.

Gov. George Arnaiz said the province was willing to sponsor at least 10 scholars to take up medicine in Norsu.

Members of the provincial board, after listening to Sojor talk about his proposal during their session last week, also approved in principle Norsu's proposal to use government hospital facilities for the doctors' training. A memorandum of agreement between the university and the provincial gov-

ernment will soon be forged.

Negros officials had earlier raised concern over the dwindling number of doctors who have opted to take up nursing courses due to the high demand for nurses abroad, particularly in the United States and Canada.

Provincial health officer Dr. Ely Villapando earlier revealed that 58 of some 200 doctors in the province were now licensed nurses and many were still taking up the course. "Even young doctors are now also studying nursing," he said.

Sojor said other localities in Mindanao could also send scholars at Norsu. He said he was informed that some mayors in Mindanao were interested in his proposal.

Sojor said Norsu's offering of medicine was mandated by Republic Act No. 9299, the law that converted CVPC into a state university. He said the mandate was in keeping with the school's thrust to help poor but deserving students take up courses of their choice.

56 abandoned logs seized in Palawan

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Fifty-six logs were confiscated by the Kilusan Sagip Kalikasan, Bantay Gubat and officials of Barangay Irawan in this city on Thursday, after the alleged owner abandoned them.

The logs, about the size of electric posts, were left inside a forest.

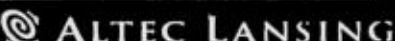
Barangay chair Benny Resuma said he had received information about illegal logging activities in his village, where the city's watershed is located.

It is also the place where the annual Feast of the Forest is held every year.

Around 100,000 seedlings are planted every year by residents over the last 10 years to protect the watershed and recover the city's shrinking forest cover. Illegal tree cutting, however, persists.

Resuma said he knew the owner of the logs, who is also a resident of his barangay.

He said the Bantay Gubat personnel had been monitoring the area in the forest, above the watershed, which has been declared a flora and fauna reservation, but illegal loggers took advantage of the holidays. *Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*




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30 banned pesticides still used in Davao farms, says UP doctor

DAVAO CITY—At least 30 chemical pesticides, already banned in their countries of origin, are still being used in agricultural plantations here, according to Dr. Romeo Quijano, president for the Philippines of the international group Pesticide Action Network (PAN).

Among the banned chemicals is Paraquat, a highly toxic synthetic substance used as herbicide on crops, such as bananas, pineapples, sugar cane.

Paraquat is marketed here as "Gramoxone." It has already been banned in European countries like Austria, Denmark, Finland, Slovenia, Sweden and in Switzerland where it was manufactured by Syngenta, a Swiss multinational company marketing it here.

Other countries banning this pesticide are Malaysia, the first Asian country to do so, Kuwait, Bulgaria, Argentina and the Dominican Republic.

"It is used in more than 130 countries where environmental laws and regulations on pesticide

imports are weak," said Quijano.

The banned chemicals used in banana plantations and other farms are putting the lives of thousands of Filipino workers at risk, Quijano warned.

The PAN, which is campaigning for a stop in the use of banned chemicals in the country, cited the case of Jeffrey Abella, 24, a banana plantation worker in Calinan District here, who used to think the job of his two co-workers soaking banana seedlings in a pool of water and chemicals was far too easy than harvesting bananas.

One day, he felt sick and dizzy and had to be hospitalized. The worker assigned to do it was absent that day, prompting the plantation lead man to pull Abella, a contractual worker who was hired barely a month ago, out of his harvesting job to handle the seedlings.

But unlike the worker he replaced, Abella was not given mask, gloves or apron to wear.

Barely two hours of handling the seedlings, he felt so sick that work-

ers had to rush him to the hospital.

"I felt dizzy, my skin and my nails turned blue, the hair of my skin stood on ends and I had trouble breathing," Abella told reporters.

Physicians at the Davao Medical Center later diagnosed him of "chemical pneumonitis," a kind of lung inflammation caused by exposure to chemicals.

"Clearly a case of chemical poisoning," said Quijano.

But no one knew for sure what chemical had poisoned Abella because the plantation where he worked refused to disclose it despite repeated requests by Abella's physician.

Quijano, a toxicologist, said Abella's case was just the tip of the iceberg. Around 25 million agricultural workers in poor countries are poisoned by pesticides every year, resulting in 220 deaths.

"This means that one of the 48 crop workers poisoned by pesticides dies every minute," said Quijano, who is also a professor at the University of the Philip-

pines College of Medicine.

In the Philippines, he said, some 806 pesticides had been registered as of December last year. Aside from Paraquat, the banned chemicals used in the country are methyl bromide, lindane and tridemorph.

Paraquat, he said, was traded in the country as gramoxone, a highly toxic substance with no known antidote.

Most of the pesticide poisonings in Malaysia were attributed to this chemical, which prompted the country to ban the product. It's also a main suicide agent in Trinidad, Spain and Tobago, according to PAN studies.

Once it enters the body, Paraquat can harm the lungs, liver and kidney. It can also cause severe dermatitis, second-degree burns and nosebleeds.

Quijano said that in the Philippines alone, around 2,000 to 3,000 cases a year of acute symptoms are reported. This excludes symptoms that take months or years before they manifest, Quijano said. *Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DPWH execs proceed with road projects on suppliers' credit

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—Lack of funds did not stop the Department of Public Works and Highways in Capiz from undertaking repair and maintenance works on national roads.

The DPWH officials obtained their materials on credit from suppliers, even at the risk of personally paying for the products should the government fund not be released, just to start the repair work on the 58-km road that connects Aklan and Iloilo provinces.

Orlando Panaguiton, Capiz district engineer, said his office could no longer wait for the release of the funds from the national government, as he was already fed up with complaints from the public.

Panaguiton and five other DPWH officials agreed to act as guarantors to the loan for the materials needed for the repair.

The other officials were Hector Gargoles, assistant district engineer; Emil Recio, chief of the construction section; Buenric Tolentino, chief of materials and quality control section; Juvencio Delgado, chief of the planning and design section; Heracleo Funa, chief of maintenance section.

Last week, Gargoles, Recio,

Tolentino, Delgado and Funa went to the site to supervise the work, which started two weeks ago.

The repair was also timely for Kalibo's Ati-atihan and Iloilo's Dinagyang Festivals this month.

Earlier, Sigma Mayor Roberto Sualog complained that several vehicles had figured in accidents due to the road's bad condition.

The same observation was echoed by Mayors Roger Flores of Cuartero and Jose Alba of Mambusao.

Panaguiton said the repair of the road was delayed because the DPWH office in Capiz had yet to receive the maintenance funds from the national government.

In fact, he added, several casual employees of the DPWH here had not received their salaries for about four months now.

Capiz Rep. Fredenil Castro (second district) confirmed that there was a delay in the release of the maintenance funds meant for the repair of national roads due to the current budget deficit.

Castro said he was trying his best to seek funding for the reconstruction of the dilapidated national roads in his congressional district before his second term ends in 2007.

He said Capiz was not the only province that suffered from the delay. The problem was felt nationwide, he said.

C. Mindanao agri department pushes organic farming

KORONADAL CITY—The Department of Agriculture in Central Mindanao is now singing a different tune as it urges farmers in the region to stop the use of synthetic fertilizers and go into organic farming.

In recent years, the agency had trumpeted farm productivity programs anchored on extensive use of inorganic fertilizers. These included the Grains Productivity Enhancement Program in the early '90s and the

Masagana 99 program in the '70s.

Abusama Alid, director of the DA in Central Mindanao, said farmland needed a rest from the long period of repeated bombardment of chemical-based fertilizers.

He said going into organic farming would also give farmers respite from costly pesticides.

Should they go into organic farming, Alid said, the farmers would be ensured of less production expenses.

"Chemical fertilizers are now

costing too much and many farmer groups are now complaining of their expensive farm inputs," he said.

A bag of Urea, a common fertilizer, now costs P900 per bag or up P318 since last year.

Fertilizer import price in 2003 was \$174 per ton when the dollar peso equivalent is P54 per dollar.

This year, the import price for fertilizer increased to \$236 per ton while the peso value depreciated to P56.50 to P57, a DA data said.

Alid said the DA national office recognized the urgency of changing farming practices, with DA secretary Arthur Yap himself campaigning for organic farming.

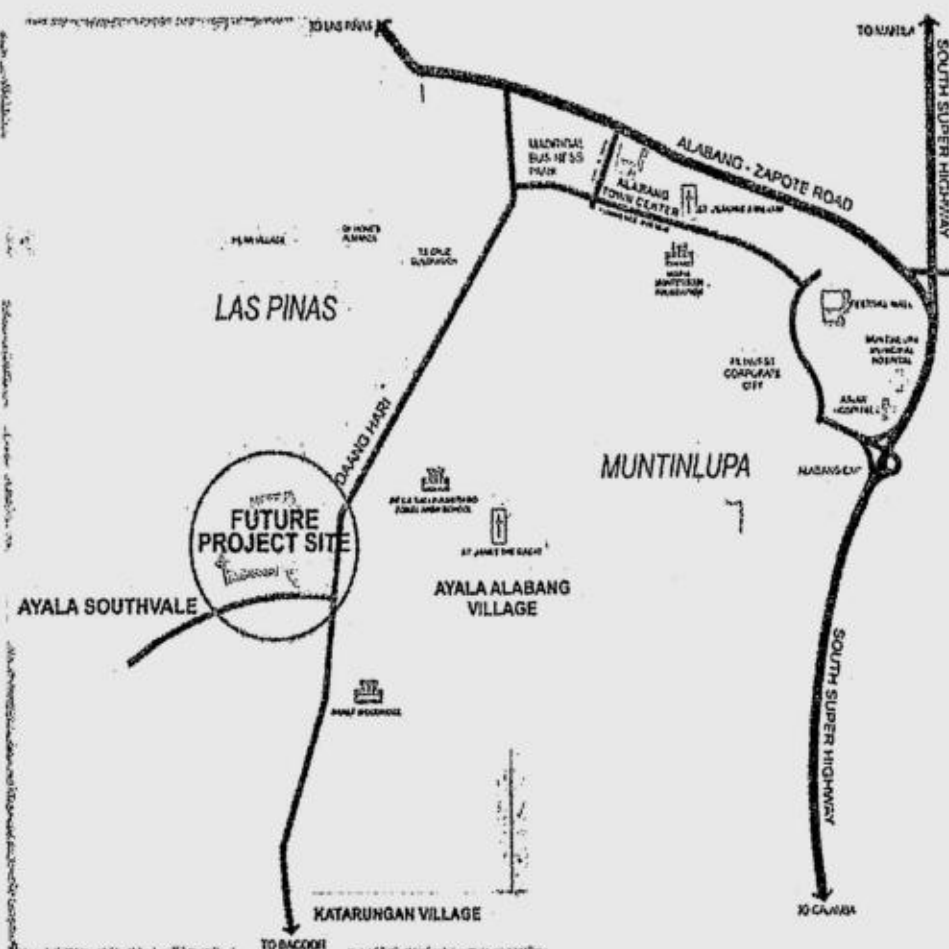
"With organic farming we can also promote safer food products and healthy environment," he said.

Alid said farmers who would adapt their organic farming program would be provided with the needed facility like waste shredders. *Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Eagerly Awaited Phase of Ayala Southvale Soon to be Ready

This year, Ayala Land Inc. will launch a new phase of Ayala Southvale Village. It covers an area of 20-hectares and has convenient access directly from Daang Hari road. Ayala Southvale Village is masterplanned to be a residential subdivision with lots for single-detached houses.

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Australian growers block entry of Philippine bananas

By Germelina Lacorte
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Hopes are getting dim for Mindanao's banana growers to enter the Australian market this year.

Banana growers in Australia are putting up a fund, called the Banana Industry Fighting Fund levy, to block the entry of Philippine bananas.

Collected five cents per carton from Australian banana growers, the fund reflects the mounting pressures that the growers exert on their own government against the opening up of the market, according to a statement released through the website of the Australian Banana Growers Council (ABGC).

"The industry must take whatever it takes to win this fight," said Len Collins, ABGC spokesperson, in the statement, "including engaging the best scientific minds in the country to develop our case."

Business traders in Mindanao—the top producer of Philippine bananas for exports—had earlier expressed optimism on the Australian market, with the recent entry of the Northern Territory (NT) to the four-country East Asian Growth Area (Eaga).

But mounting pressures from Australian growers against Philippine bananas do not show any letting down this year.

Collins said the industry spent over A\$1.5 million last year on briefings, Senate hearings and marathon sessions and other scientific and statistical research to boost the industry's argument against Philippine bananas.

He said the industry was willing to spend more this year.

That's why Collin has been urging Australian banana growers to contribute more to the fund to "help ensure the industry can see the imports case (against Philippine bananas) through to its rightful conclusion."

"Our consultants do not come cheap, but the alternative was to stand by while faceless Canberra bureaucrats handed over responsibility of Australia's quarantine regime to Philippine plantation owners and workers."

The ABGC claims to have close to 2,000 Australian growers as members.

The industry is still awaiting the revised draft Import Risk Analysis report on the Philippine bananas from Biosecurity Australia this year, the statement said.

The Philippine government has filed a case before the World Trade Organization (WTO) because of Australia's continued refusal to open its market to Philippine bananas, which have been exported in the world market, including Japan and the US.

NCIP to issue more land claim certificates to Mangyan folk

By Madonna Virola
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CITY OF CALAPAN—The National Commission on Indigenous People is processing more applications for certificates of ancestral domain claim (CADC) involving 3,500 hectares of public land for the Mangyan Tadyawan tribe in Pinamalayan town and the Tadyawan and Taubuhid tribes in Gloria town.

This development surfaced during the first Mangyan people's caucus held Jan. 6-7 at the St. Benedictine Monastery.

The caucus also tackled guidelines on the establishment of the indigenous peoples' consultative body in the next meeting in February where the provincial representatives will be chosen to form it.

More than 50 leaders, representing about 70,000 Mangyans from all seven tribes in the province, or 30 percent of Oriental Mindoro's Mangyan population, were present during the assembly.

"The consultative body will help the commissioners in formulating policies," said Romeo Morente, NCIP community development officer III in the second district.

There are six CADC areas and five pending direct applications for certificates of ancestral title (CADT), Morente said.

Direct application for a CADT, which is

only applicable now for small areas, means one no longer has to apply for a CADC first.

But processing CADT applications will be more laborious, Morente claimed.

He said the seventh CADC, located in Talipanan, Puerto Galera, was already granted the first CADT last year.

The CADCs used to be issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources until 1998.

But under the Indigenous People's Rights Act, it has been taken over by the NCIP.

The provincial government has released its counterpart of P200,000 for the conversion of the CADCs into the CADTs in Naujan town, according to Zeny Carena, provincial administrative officer.

The Pinamalayan municipal government released P150,000, while Bongabong issued a P100,000 check. Other LGUs might follow soon, Morente said.

The NCIP may address the next batch of CADCs involving 94,000 hectares during the second quarter, he said.

The Mangyan assembly is being assisted by the Assisi Development Foundation Inc. and the NCIP, with support from the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, the European Commission and Danish Foreign Ministry.

Asian migratory birds back at Candaba Swamp

From page A1

actually ducks locally called *du-mara*. Only five or six of these were seen in recent years, but Fisher counted more than 1,000 yesterday.

"I have not seen [these birds] for many, many years," said Fisher, a British expert, who began bird-watching here in 1979.

On Saturday and Sunday, Fisher, 57, joined the Asian Water Bird Census 2005, collaboratively done for the first time here by the Candaba municipal government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines, Haribon and some 100 Filipino, Chinese and Japanese bird enthusiasts.

Census in Africa, Europe, Central and West Asia, and Latin America were held at about the same time.

The rare, streaked reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus sorgophilus*), however, was not among the 35 species that Fisher saw during the two-day census. The Candaba Swamp is the only site in the country that the warbler visits, the Haribon said.

"We need to bring back the reed beds," Fisher said of plants that draw these birds to the swamp.

Farmer Ignacio Sagum, 69, said much of the *bayakbak* (a kind of water grass) and the *tukal* (lotus-like flower) which the birds feasted on were almost gone now because of increased agricultural activities at the

swamp straddling the western boundaries of Pampanga, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija.

Ducks to water

But here's another surprise: At a large pond in Sitio Doña Simang in the village of Vizal San Pablo, as many as 40,000 species of ducks were seen homing, according to Edwin Capulong of the DENR's Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau.

Fisher confirmed the number, which was 60 percent higher than what bird specialist Simplicia Alonzo-Pasicolan counted during the peak migration season (October-November) in 1987.

"They're extraordinarily many. They were never there before," Fisher said.

Also, the number of species this year was more diverse.

Haribon, citing a bird-watching trip in October 2001, mentioned only 10 species. The DENR counted only eight, most of them in the family of egrets.

For the birds

Why the birds began returning and growing in significant numbers could be traced to the efforts of the Pelayo couple, according to Fisher and to Ed Manangu, chair of the Candaba Swamp Migratory Birds and Wildlife Foundation Inc.

Lani and her husband, now Candaba Mayor Jerry Pelayo, had set aside 70 hectares of land in Vizal, San Pablo, as a "home for the birds."

In the last three years, or be-

fore Jerry won in last year's elections, Lani said she and her husband had stopped using their property as a rice farm or fishpond. "They're all now for the birds," she said.

Jerry, a private contractor, bought the property 10 years ago. As a Candaba native, he realized in between farming that the birds had diminished over time.

The birds he saw as a boy were no longer there, he observed. "Before, they darkened the horizon whenever they flocked and played in the fields," Jerry said.

Bird sanctuary

Since 2000, the couple had stopped draining the ponds, allowed the *bayakbak* and *tukal* to grow, and even threw in some tilapia fingerlings. They noticed that the birds started frequenting the place and, later, settled in the area from October to April.

Today, aside from the ponds, the birds' favorite places are the eucalyptus trees around them. On Saturdays at dusk, thousands of egrets and herons, many as tall as a man's leg, roost on the trees, giving them a snowy white hue from afar.

The birds are largely undisturbed in this part of the swamp because the Pelayos have banned bird-hunting for food. Volunteers from Manangu's group take turns guarding various sites against hunters.

While the Pelayos' land has become an established bird sanctuary, Manangu said other landowners cannot exercise



NO LONGER a lonely hut in the Candaba Swamp with thousands of feathered visitors arriving from other Asian countries.

JOAN BONDOC

the same option.

Many of them are agrarian reform beneficiaries of small plots from estates previously owned by the Limjoco and Alejandrino families of Bulacan, he said.

Manangu said the plan to acquire 500 hectares of land and develop them as a protected sanctuary went as far back as 1994 when experts gathered for an international conference and called attention to the destruction of the habitat of Asian waterfowl.

Where the fowl play

Municipal governments, like that of Candaba, are always try-

ing to strike a balance between the needs of people and birds. The town has recently passed a resolution declaring the Pelayos' property a private bird sanctuary. But with conservation efforts in the last 10 years now taking shape, Manangu believes the swamp is "back on the bird map."

Fisher said the swamp had actually not been dropped from the Asian bird map but its viability had been reduced because agricultural activities and hunting expeditions had upset the fowl.

Certainly, experts said, it was going to take years before the

swamp regained its original form, meaning as a habitat for 140 migratory species.

"It's definitely a good sanctuary but a lot of effort would have to be collectively exerted to return it to its (former) state," Fisher said.

Pelayo said the municipal government had tapped Japan's help in developing a large bird sanctuary.

This would serve as an education center for the local youth, getting them interested in bird-watching and hopefully, convincing them to be advocates of nature conservation.

Kidnapped German, boyfriend rescued

From page A1

leave (Awol) for six months, a police report obtained by the INQUIRER showed.

The gang had demanded a ransom of P30 million.

"They were just a group of robbers who decided to band together and try kidnapping," Philippine National Police Intelligence Director and Pacer chief Robert Delfin said.

Authorities refused to divulge more details about the raid pending the presentation of the suspects before the media at Camp Crame this morning.

Early morning raid

Pacer operatives, backed by the local police, rescued the kidnapped pair at about 2 a.m. when they broke into an apartment on Birds of Paradise Street, Hansuyin Village, Talon 4, Las Piñas City, according to Delfin.

Also involved in the operation were agents of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), the Special Action Force and the Naval Intelligence Security Group.

Five of the suspects were surprised at the safe house while the rest were arrested during follow-up operations at Green Valley in Bacoor, Cavite, and at Victoria Homes in Barangay Tunasan, Muntinlupa, Delfin said.

They were brought to Pacer headquarters in Camp Crame for interrogation.

Guns and explosives

The raids yielded firearms and explosives, including a .45-cal. pistol, a hand grenade, a smoke grenade, a PNP camouflage uniform and two vans, a Toyota Lite Ace and a Hyundai.

Delfin said Pacer had been hot on the suspects' trail since they abducted Schoof and Cruz on Jan. 11 outside a popular coffee shop—where Cruz works—in Madrigal Industrial Village near the posh Ayala-Alabang Village in Muntinlupa.

The suspects then phoned the victim's relatives, demanding P30 million.

'Don't pay'

Police advised the relatives not to yield, saying they were already closing in on the gang, and no ransom was paid, Delfin said.

Investigators initially suspected that the suspects belonged to the Waray Waray group, the notorious syndicate behind a string of high-profile

kidnap-for-ransom cases in Metro Manila.

But they turned out to be just a band of robbers who had decided to try their luck at kidnapping, making Schoof and Cruz their first victims, Delfin said.

The victims were found in one of the rooms of the two-story apartment, which radio reports said was owned by one Nenita Manalo.

Posed as OFW

Interviewed over radio dzMM, Manalo said she rented out the apartment to Velasquez last November and that he claimed to be an overseas Filipino worker.

She said Velasquez was with his supposed wife when they met to discuss the rental, and that the pair even told her that their 6-year-old son would be studying in the area.

"I never saw the kid, but my plumber told me that he saw several burly-looking men inside the house just this week," Manalo said.

Police recovered the Lite Ace van parked in front of the apartment. The vehicle was believed to have been stolen and would be part of the evidence against the suspects.

NCRPO Director Avelino Razon said the names of the suspects were not immediately available because they were still undergoing investigation in Camp Crame.

Kidnapping on the decline?

A team of Scene of the Crime Operatives (Soco) from the Southern Police District headquarters had been dispatched to the place to lift prints and see if they would match those of the suspects'.

The abduction of Schoof and Cruz was the first reported kidnapping case this year in Metro Manila, where kidnapping for ransom has been on the decline, according to anticrime watchdogs.

Teresita Ang-See, head of Citizens Action against Crime, said there was a 60 percent drop in kidnapping cases in 2004 compared to 2003. The number of cases in 2004 was the lowest in 11 years, she said.

Businessmen have said kidnappings in Manila was one of the factors that had scared off potential investors.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last year ordered a massive crackdown on kidnappers, leading to the arrest or killing of several kidnap gang leaders.

With an AFP report

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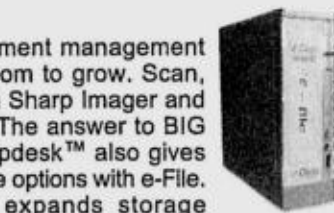
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Ati-atihan turns bloody

From page A1

olence had scarred a prime tourist destination in the country. In May 2004, three foreigners and their Filipino maid were murdered on the paradise island of Boracay.

All that remained of the crowded street earlier filled with revelers was the long trail of blood leading to where Moreño fell, gunned down by his fellow policemen.

47 empty shells

Police said Moreño shot dead his own boss, acting provincial police director Supt. Odelardo Magayanes, and Chief Insp. Manuel Ilejay Jr., police chief of Kalibo.

Also killed were PO1 Devy Tompong, SPO1 Juan Gorion and PO2 Ricky Urquiola. The remains of the fatalities were taken to the Funeraria Sampaton in Kalibo.

Police recovered at least 47 empty shells of an M-16 rifle believed to be from Moreño. Several parked vehicles bore bullet holes.

Moreño served as close-in security of Magayanes as they left the Kalibo police station at around 8:45 a.m. Police could not explain why Moreño would choose to shoot his superiors.

He had been observed to be listless and unusually silent ("tutala") on the eve of the shooting. He also refused a cup of coffee served him by Magayanes' wife, Ramona, while they were having breakfast at the police chief's house.

'Viva Sto. Niño!'

Police said the shooting hap-

pened just minutes after the priest in the Kalibo Cathedral had exclaimed "Viva Sto. Niño!" to signal the end of the Mass and the start of the traditional street party and procession.

Using the shouts and cheers from the revelers as cover, Moreño began shooting people in his path, police said.

Revelers and vendors scrambled for their lives.

The shooting silenced the drums and the xylophones, stopping the revelry for five hours.

Many Aklanons and guests stood in shock and disbelief as music blaring from speakers was replaced by radio reports of the killings.

Shot from behind

Magayanes, Moreño and three other police escorts were on their way to their vehicles when the policeman, who was walking behind Magayanes, unleashed his fury.

Policemen at the station at first thought that Magayanes' group had been ambushed by snipers.

Ilejay, one of those killed moments later, went out and even approached Moreño, said Senior Supt. Jose Jorge Corpuz, Western Visayas chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Moreño shot Ilejay before fleeing to a street where he met five members of the 6th Regional Mobile Group, who had come to investigate the shooting.

Other victims

He was gunned down after he shot and wounded two of the policemen.

The wounded included PO1

Antonio Montreal, PO1 Eduardo Gale, SPO2 Joselito Tabios, PO4 Villazar Villanoche and PO1 Joseph Gebusion.

Also wounded were Conrado Indibebe, RGMA Kalibo news and public affairs supervisor, and Vic Ibesate, technical director of radio station dyKR of Radio Mindanao Network.

Others wounded were Julie Ann Pamela; Joanna Mae Pamela, 14; Jhong Pamela, 5; Dolores Pamela, 34; Nelly Dichoson, 39; Augustin Dichoson, 39; Angelic Dichoson, 13; Arjan Dichoson, 11; Aimee Grace Dichoson, 8; Criselda Banjao, 44; Jonilo Eubale, 16; Sonia Tinao, 54; physician Dem Tirol, an internist at the Dr. Rafael Tumbokon Memorial Hospital, and Lorenz de la Cruz.

'I felt cold'

Most of their injuries were in the feet and legs.

Asuncion Andrade, 55, was mixing cool drinks at her kiosk when she heard gunfire. Moments later, a woman and her child, both wounded in the legs, sought cover in her store.

Andrade and her companions hid in the lavatory.

"I was afraid. People were running and screaming and I felt cold," she told the INQUIRER.

French tourists Alexandra Coiffe and Rachel Felgines were shocked when they heard about the shooting.

Town shocked

"Nobody told us. We're just wondering why the drums and dancing stopped," said Coiffe.

"It's the first time that this has happened here. It's shocking," said Tony, a resident.

It was only around 3 p.m. when the revelry resumed after government and church officials decided to continue with the religious procession and the famed snake-dancing in the streets.

Kalibo Mayor Raymar Rebaldo found it "very unfortunate" that the incident happened in the middle of the celebration.

Both Aklan Gov. Carlito Marquez and Rep. Florencio Miraflores dismissed the incident as an "isolated case" and urged Aklanons to go on with the celebration.

Isolated incident

The deaths of Magayanes and Ilejay were viewed by residents as a heavy blow to the police campaign against crime. The two had been campaigning against illegal drugs, illegal numbers game, gunrunning, illegal logging and other forms of illegal activity in Aklan.

Moreño belonged to the provincial chief's security detail, PNP officials said. He was also the star witness in the police case against alleged big-time drug lord Boy Cuadra who was arrested in Caticlan in 2003, according to Aliño.

Cuadra is now detained at the Aklan Rehabilitation Center, he said.

Magayanes died from four bullet wounds, all in the back. Most of the officers were also hit in the back, Aglipay said.

"We would like to emphasize that this is an isolated case," Aliño said. "This is the handiwork of a mentally deranged man." With reports from Christian V. Esguerra and Recto I. Vidal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Police officer under 'tremendous pressure'

From page A1

Supt. Odelardo Magayanes.

"Maybe he feared for his safety as a witness," said Aliño. Aglipay directed Aliño to "dig deeper" into the cause of the shootings. Aklan Rep. Florencio Miraflores said policemen should be regularly sub-

jected to psychological tests.

Miraflores raised fears that the incident would affect the image of Aklan and the Ati-atihan. The festival draws thousands of foreign and local tourists every year.

"This is a test of our faith in the Sto. Niño," Kalibo Mayor Reymar Rebaldohe said.

Leader in Iraq prison scandal gets 10 years

From page A1

jury of four Army officers and six senior enlisted men deliberated about two hours to determine Graner's sentence.

Graner, who had been free prior to trial, was taken into custody after the sentence was read. He gave his mother, Irma, a big hug and his father, Charles Sr., a firm handshake before the jury foreman read the sentence.

"He's scared to death," Irma Graner said later.

Graner was accused of stacking naked prisoners in a human pyramid and later ordering them to masturbate while other soldiers took photographs. He also allegedly punched one man in the head hard enough to knock him out, and struck an injured prisoner with a collapsible metal stick.

Scapegoats

Defense lawyer Guy Womack said his client and the six other Abu Ghraib guards charged with abuses were scapegoats, but added that he thought the jury did its job well.

"I firmly believe there should have been reasonable doubt, but we respect their decision," Womack said outside the courthouse. He added that he had feared Graner could have received a harsher sentence than the 10-year term.

Prosecutors Maj. Michael Holley and Capt. Chris Graveline would not speak to reporters, but they said in a joint statement, "We think it is important that the world was able to observe this court-martial."

Under military court rules, Graner's case will be automatically appealed to the Army Court of Criminal Appeals. He also could request clemency from his commanding general.

Graner did not testify during his trial. But during the sentencing phase on Saturday, he took the witness stand to repeat the defense claim that the jury clearly rejected—that he had been ordered by intelligence agents at Abu Ghraib to abuse the prisoners to make them easier to interrogate.

Womack asked him why he was smiling in the infamous photos, some of which were shown while Graner spoke.

"I'm smiling now, and that's a nervous smile," Graner said.

Corrupted by seniors

Graner described himself as a by-the-book prison guard corrupted by seniors who ordered him to physically mistreat and sexually humiliate detainees.

He said he initially resisted pressure to mistreat prisoners, but his Army superiors made it clear to him that he was expected to obey the commands of the military and civilian intelligence agents who ran his part of Abu Ghraib.

Graner said a lieutenant in his unit told him: "If (military intelligence) asks you to do this, it needs to be done. They're in charge, follow their orders."

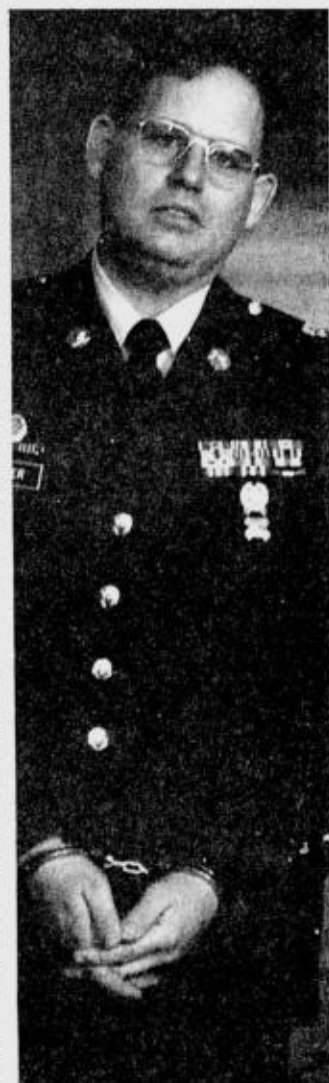
He said he now knew that those orders were unlawful, but "at the time my understanding is that they were (lawful), or I wouldn't have done them," he said.

Graner, a 36-year-old reservist from Pennsylvania, spoke for nearly three hours as an "unsworn statement," meaning he was not subject to cross-examination by prosecutors. He did not testify during his trial.

He concluded by saying: "I didn't enjoy what I did there ... A lot of it was wrong, a lot of it was criminal."

Holley, the co-prosecutor, said in his final statement that Graner was a disgrace to the military and urged the 10 jurors to send him to prison for the maximum sentence.

"The time for Specialist Graner to be responsible for his actions is



GRANER in shackles after his conviction

finally here," Holley said.

5 charges

Graner faced 10 counts under five separate charges—assault, conspiracy, maltreatment of detainees, committing indecent acts and dereliction of duty. He was found guilty on all counts, except that one assault count was downgraded to battery.

Four soldiers have pleaded guilty in the case. Two other guards from the 372nd Military Police Company, a reserve unit from Cresaptown, Maryland, are awaiting trial, along with Pfc. Lynndie England, a clerk at Abu Ghraib who last fall gave birth to a baby believed to be fathered by Graner.

Throughout Graner's 4 1/2-day trial, prosecutors depicted him as a sadist who took great pleasure in seeing detainees suffer.

"It was for sport, for laughs," prosecutor Graveline told jurors in his closing argument on Friday. "What we have here is plain abuse. There is no justification."

Iraqi detainee Hussein Mutar, in videotaped testimony shown as the sentencing phase began on Friday evening, said he had supported the US-led invasion to oust Saddam Hussein until he was abused.

"The Americans came to free the Iraqi people from Saddam," Mutar said. "I didn't expect this to happen. This instance changed the entire picture of the American people (for me)."

Mother speaks

Irma Graner, testifying in the sentencing phase, described her son as a kind and gentle man who faithfully served his country.

"He is not the monster he's made out to be," she said quietly. "In my eyes he'll always be a hero."

The shocking photos of reservists abusing and sexually humiliating prisoners were first broadcast on CBS's "60 Minutes II" in April last year.

A month later, President George W. Bush urged Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to make sure that any guilty US soldiers get punished for "shameful and appalling acts." AP



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Moms leave 3 kids in fire to save their other children

By Nancy C. Carvajal

HER SILENCE said it all.

Rose Miraflor stared blankly at the gutted house where she and her three children used to live on Decena Street, Pasay City.

She neither gave any loud cries nor spoke to anyone, but the tears that cascaded down her cheeks in apparent endless succession seemed to tell of the pain and grief that was inside of her.

Miraflor was standing in the darkened street waiting for word of her son, Edward, 11, whom she left hours earlier inside their burning house.

But when the charred remains of Edward was finally found and pulled out of the ruins, she did not know it was him, leaving her wondering and waiting for the rest of the evening.

"Ang lalim kasi niyang matulog (He was a sound sleeper)," Miraflor related to the INQUIRER in the few instances that she spoke that evening.

She said she tried to rouse Edward but had to leave him behind when he failed to wake up.

Miraflor said she thought of saving her two other children first and then go back for Edward.

"Hindi ko na siya nabalikan dahil lumaki na ang apoy (I was not able to go back for him because the fire had already grown big)," the mother related.

Edward and two other children: Maymay Buco, 5, and her sister Tintin, 3, were killed when fire hit on Saturday night the two-story house they were renting.

Maymay and Tintin were also left behind because their mother, Nancy, could only take her newborn child and two other children with her when she fled.

Nancy apparently also thought of going back for her two other children but, like Miraflor, was overtaken by the blaze.

The remains of Maymay and Tintin

were recovered at 7 a.m. yesterday.

According to fire investigators, the blaze started at the house which the Miraflor and Buco families were renting rooms with three other families.

Around 90 houses were destroyed in the blaze that affected some 300 families.

Later, firemen led by district fire marshal Chief Supt. Ruben Morales had a hard time retrieving the bodies of the victims due to lack of equipment.

Rescuers were equipped with small flashlights only.

Morales explained that they used to borrow floodlights from the Metro Manila Development Authority but there was no standard procedure on how to request for the equipment.

Also, as if the tragedy that befell the Miraflor and Buco families was not enough, some drunken men threw water on Morales and Tondo fire chief volunteer Mario Flordelizam while the two were discussing ways on how to retrieve the children's bodies.

It's a go for wet rag scheme

By Ruth L. Navarra

GET OFF the street or get wet.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is deploying eight vans today to implement its "wet rag scheme."

The scheme was conceptualized by the MMDA to force pedestrians to stay on side-

walks. The vans are equipped with a sound system to warn pedestrians of their arrival.

Those who refuse to heed the warning will be dabbled with wet blankets hanging from a pole attached to the van. Each blanket has the words "Maglakad at mag-abang sa bangketa" written on it.

Trailing these vans are law

enforcers who would make sure that pedestrians do not return to the streets.

Fernando said the vans would not cause traffic even if they occupy one lane on the streets because each van would run at 20 kilometers per hour.

Ironically, in Makati, Pasay and Manila it will be the vans that would not be allowed on the streets.

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Special games give fun, joy to youngsters

Playing dead saves victim

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NOT BOTHERED by the sun, they tirelessly ran around the field, danced to booming music whenever they could, and mingled with strangers unabashed.

And when it was time for competition, they gleefully jumped the farthest their legs could take them, and ran toward the finish line as fast as they could, seemingly unmindful of whether they won or not.

As any typical kid would, some 450 differently-abled children spent their Sunday engrossed in play, even while partaking in a rather serious-sounding sort: their own little Olympics.

The children, aged 5 to 12 years old from public and private special schools around Metro Manila, showed up yesterday for the 15th For-The-Kids (FTK) Mini-Olympics at the De La Salle University (DLSU) in Manila.

"We would like the mentally and physically challenged children to be in a competition, a friendly competition where they could gain self worth," said Gaily Villanueva, lead FTK coordinator from the Center for Social Concern and Action (COSCA) of DLSU.

This on-campus volunteer organization has been organizing FTKs since 1984.

That year, DLSU's Physical Education department organized a mini summer Olympics for the hearing impaired, an event that the private university felt must be pursued and expanded to accommodate differently-abled kids other than the deaf.

But since 1994, the fourth time the FTK Mini-Olympics was held irregularly, the COSCA committed to holding the sporting event annually, this time enjoining kids with physical or mental disabilities.

CARLOS Jardenil, 66, a businessman and former Navotas councilor, pretended to be dead and survived an ambush Saturday night in Malabon City.

Police later arrested two suspects, who claimed they were hired to kill Jardenil.

Jardenil was driving his owner-type jeep on Sanciangco Street at about 7 p.m. when a white Mitsubishi Lancer blocked his path.

One of the suspects shot Jardenil and hit him in the left cheek, police said.

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Ateneo salutes Pacita Abad

THE ATENEO Library of Women's Writings (ALIWW) will honor the late visual artist Pacita Abad this afternoon with a program that will showcase her multifaceted talent and passion for the arts.

The event, dubbed "Parangal for Pacita Abad," will start at 4 p.m. at the St. Thomas More Garden of the Ateneo de Manila University campus in Loyola Heights.

Highlights of the ALIWW tribute will be a lecture on Abad and her art by Corazon S. Alvina, director of the National Museum, and an exhibition at the Pardo de Tavera Room of the Ateneo's Rizal Library of select works by the artist, as well as of personal correspondence and photographs and other memorabilia.

Guests are requested to come in colorful Filipiniana attire and to bring memorabilia of Pacita Abad that they may have.

A lecture-exhibit to honor a Filipino woman in the visual arts has been an annual ALIWW event for the last five years and is made possible by the Helenica Foundation.

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MAC CARDONA leads scoring

Big Cardona numbers after PBL elims

By Jasmine W. Payo

HE'S THE smallest among the league's top players. But ICTSI-La Salle's Mac Cardona still dominated the statistical race by the end of the elimination round of the PBL Open Championship.

Cardona is the most explosive offensive player so far in the tournament with a 23.08 point average. At 6-1, he still managed to rank eighth with a 6.15 rebound average board. The plucky guard put together a

solid all-around performance by finishing seventh in steals at 1.38 spg and 10th in assists at 2.92 apg.

Montafia Pawnshop's Jon Dan Salvador, considered as one of the league's best post-up players, ranked second overall. He again trailed Cardona in scoring at 14 ppg, but secured third spot in rebounding at 8.29.

At 20, JR Quiñahan is the youngest among the tournament standouts. Granny Goose's rookie bruiser had the most blocked shots

per game at 2.5. He had an 8.29 rpg, tying Salvador for third place, and owned a team-best 9.43 ppg.

Anthony Washington, Welcoat's rookie sensation, dominated the boards with 9.43 rpg. The 6-foot-7 Fil-Am also finished third best in scoring at 13.57 ppg.

Behind these two rookies is reigning Most Valuable Player Arwind Santos. Although he didn't top any of the statistical rankings, the lithe Magnolia-FEU leader contin-

ued to impress by placing second in rebounds at 8.86 rpg and third in blocks at 1.64 bpg. He also led his team offensively at 9.93 ppg.

Other players who delivered notable performances were Toyota Otis-Letran rookie Mark Andaya (8.71 ppg, 7.21 rpg, 2.14 bpg); Welcoat's Marvin Ortiguerra (10.79 ppg, 5.21 rpg), and AMP-Ateneo's Gabby Espinas, recently honored by the PSA as the best in amateur basketball, (6.31 ppg, 8.15 rpg, 1.08 bpg).

Meanwhile, Magnum Membrere was chosen as the PBL Player of the Week after powering AMP-Ateneo's successful bid to barge into the quarterfinals.

Last Thursday, the wiry guard scored seven of his 11 points in the final quarter of the Eagles' knockout game against Toyota Otis-Letran, 67-57.

Two days earlier, Membrere also shot the clutch baskets in the Eagles' surprising overtime win against veteran-laden Montafia, 78-72.

STANKOVIC CUP

Fiba chief honors Danding with invite

By Al S. Mendoza

HONG KONG—Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, a staunch supporter of Philippine basketball since the 1970s, has been invited as guest of honor during the inaugural staging of the Boris Stankovic Cup in Beijing this July.

The invitation was announced by Dr. Carl Ching Men Ky in a press conference at a plush restaurant before local sports journalists and TV reporters in this winter-embraced shopper's haven over the weekend.

'Legendary moves'

Present were Go Teng Kok, the recently appointed project director for the Basketball Association of the Philippines, BAP secretary general Graham Lim and BAP legal counsel Boni Alentajan.

Cojuangco used to be the project director himself for basketball.

"I remember Danding as the one who brought a Philippine team to Hong Kong in the '80s in a bid to regain basketball power for your country in the ABC," said Dr. Ching, the president of Fiba (World Basketball Federation). "I've heard many more legendary moves that he'd done in the name of basketball in your country."

Dr. Ching, the ABC (Asia Basketball Confederation) president for 28 years before getting himself elected Fiba president in 2002, said the Stankovic



COJUANGCO: Guest of honor

Cup will be held July 26-31.

Champions invited

The Stankovic Cup, featuring the champions of the Americas (United States, Canada and South America), top-ranked squads from Europe, Africa and Asia and other illustrious teams like Olympic champion Argentina and runner-up Italy, is held in honor of the now-retired Boris Stankovic, the longest-serving secretary general of Fiba.

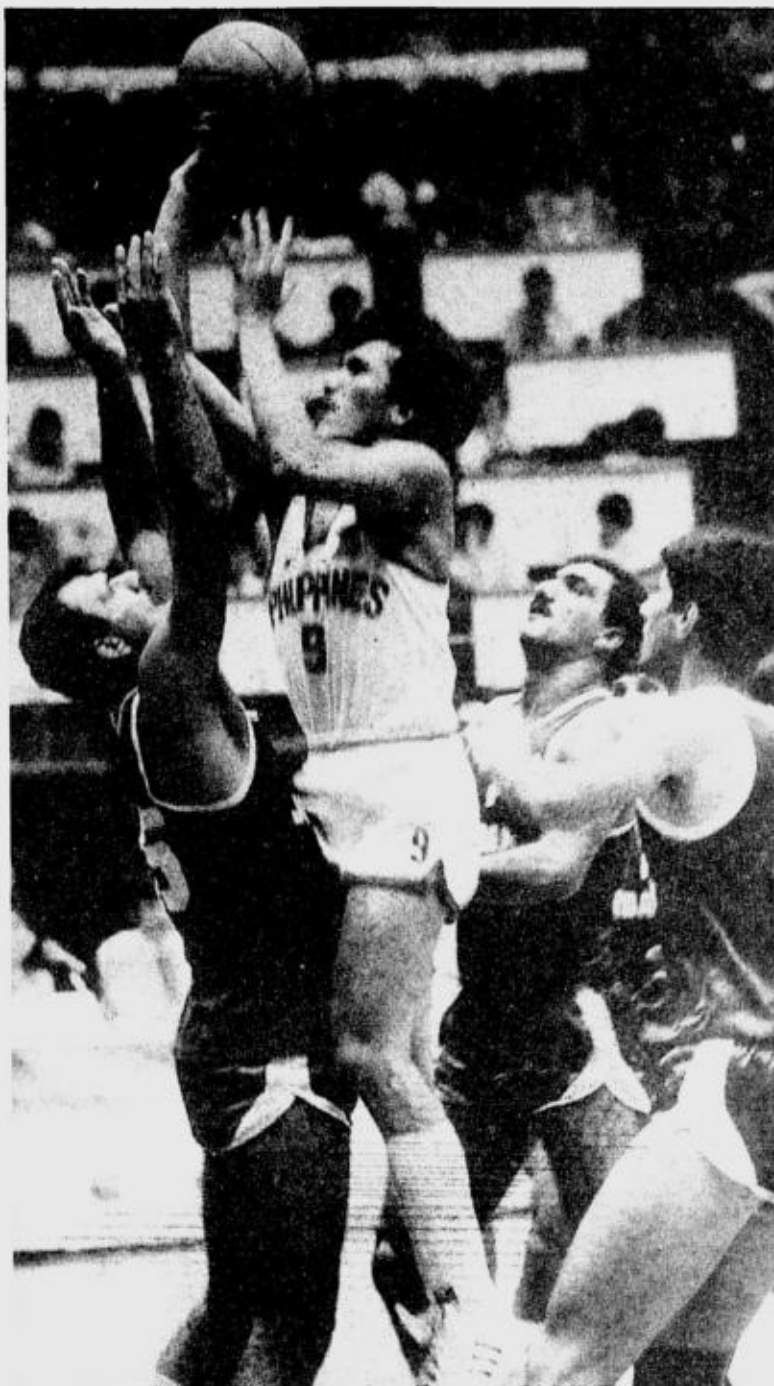
It was while Stankovic was Fiba's top gun that Cojuangco started a program to boost RP amateur basketball following the formation of the play-for-pay Philippine Basketball Association in 1975.

It was in 1984 that Cojuangco brought his American-reinforced team to Hong Kong for the ABC Championship.

Although the bid was unsuccessful, Cojuangco next dispatched the RP team supported by Northern Cement to Gerona, Spain, for the World Clubs championship.

Jones Cup winner

It was there that the likes of Allan Caidic, Samboy Lim, Yves Dignadice, Hector Calma, Tonichi Yturri and Franz



SAMBOY Lim (9) makes his inimitable "skywalker" maneuver in a game against Jordan in the 1986 Asiad. Lim and Allan Caidic were the chief gunners of the RP team bankrolled by Cojuangco's Northern Consolidated Cement firm.

Pumaren would shine on the world stage under American coach Ron Jacobs.

Danding finally achieved international success when his team won the 1985 Jones Cup in Taiwan, beating tough opponents from the United States and Europe.

That was the last time the Philippines tasted victory with an amateur team in the Jones Cup, where a PBA squad carrying the national colors and formed under the new partnership between the PBA and BAP is set to compete this July.

The Centennial team of PBA stars coached by Tim Cone also won the Jones Cup in 1998 in its buildup for that year's Asian Games.

'Most honored'

"Indeed, I'll be most honored to see Mr. Danding Cojuangco accept my invitation for him to come to Beijing in July," said Dr. Ching. "And although the inaugural tournament of the Stankovic Cup is to be held in Beijing, it does not mean it will be held there permanently. Who knows Manila will next host it next year?"

The idea of the event also going to RP later drew a favorable response from Go, the team manager of the Robert Jaworski-coached PBA squad that took the silver medal in the 1990 Beijing Asian Games.

"All the time, Mr. Ching," Go said.

No RP team slot for Asi—Gonzalez

By Philip C. Tubeza

IT'S UP to the Basketball Association of the Philippines to decide whether Asi Taulava could again play for the national basketball team, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday.

Gonzalez said that while he had sent a letter advising the BAP not to include the so-called "Fil-shams" in the national team, he was leaving it up to the BAP officials to decide the issue.

"That's up to them," said Gonzalez. "I've already sent a letter saying that they should refrain from allowing 'Fil-shams' to play," Gonzalez said.

The BAP and the PBA are now in the process of forming an RP team for the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Championship this year to kick off a four-year program both cage bodies hope will culminate in the return of the Filipino cagers to the Olympic basketball competition in 2008.

The PBA suspended Taulava and five other players born overseas who were declared "Fil-shams" by the DOJ last year based on a Senate report that ruled the six had faked their citizenship and should be deported.

Wish to join RP team

Taulava last week said he was hoping to join the national team besides being allowed to play again in the PBA. He played for the national team of PBA stars, who landed fourth in the 2002 Busan Asian Games.

The Talk 'N Text pivotman, who was already rebuffed twice by a Quezon City court in his bid to have the PBA suspension lifted, issued the statement after a Manila court came up with a permanent injunction stopping the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Immigration from conducting deportation proceedings against him.

Gonzalez said the DOJ would appeal the permanent injunction, adding the BAP would have to decide if Taulava could play for the national team despite his letter.

In a letter to the BAP on Jan. 12, Gonzalez inquired if there were Filipino-foreigners undergoing tryouts for the Philippine team.

Indirect recognition

"If there is truth to this report, this is an indirect way of recognizing them as Filipinos in disregard of the ruling of the Department of Justice that they are not Filipino citizens," said Gonzalez.

"The fact that some of them, like Asi Taulava, have secured temporary restraining order does not per se make them Filipinos," he added.

In October, Gonzalez ordered the BI to deport Red Bull's Davonn Harp, Jon Ordonio and Mick Pennisi, Rudy Hatfield of Coca-Cola, and Alex Crisano of Barangay Ginebra—after the DOJ determined that they had faked their citizenship.

However, the deportation proceedings against Taulava were "held in abeyance unless and until" the injunction Asi had earlier secured from a Manila court was lifted.

Fans miss Asi play

Meanwhile, fans of Taulava looked forward to seeing him anew in the PBA in the wake of the permanent injunction issued by a Manila court.

"Wala nang rason pa ang PBA para di paglaruin si Asi (There's no reason why the PBA won't allow him to play now)," said Beng Bonus, president of Asi's Circle of Friend (ACF).

Bonus was joined by ACF chapter presidents Jerome Gonzales of Taytay, Rizal, and Aga Jose of Bulacan in asking the PBA to rescind its suspension of Taulava.

Gonzales said Asi's suspension was based on a mere opinion of the DOJ, adding the league should correct the injustice done on the player.

Jose said the PBA committed a human rights violation in suspending Taulava who was doing honest work for his Filipino wife and two kids.

Chito Flores, a lawyer-fan of Taulava, also noted that since Asi has an inchoate claim to Filipino citizenship, as recognized by the Philippine government four years ago, he cannot be summarily deported like an alien.



TAULAVA PDI PHOTO

Did Taulava miscalculate?

SUSPENDED marquee player Asi Taulava of Talk 'N Text was quoted recently as saying he was very sorry for having filed a million-peso damage suit against the Philippine Basketball Association last year.

"I shouldn't have done that," he said. "It was really my lawyers' decision."

The 6-foot-9 Taulava was also reported as having replaced his lawyers upon the advice of PBA commissioner Noli Eala and, since then, has taken a less combative stance, hoping to find a way to be able play in the PBA again.

The PBA suspended Taulava—and five other Filipino-foreign players—as a fake Filipino based on a Department of Justice ruling last year.

The TNT star slotman fought the suspension order in a Quezon City Regional Trial Court but he has been rebuffed twice.

The case is still pending in that sala. I say Taulava should not have sought the court's intervention to seek redress. Taulava's problem should have been resolved at the office of the PBA commissioner and not before the sala of a judge.

From my own experience, I know that the Supreme Court does not encourage the intrusion of the courts into sports disputes. The high court noted that encouraging the trend [of fil-

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Inigo



ing court suits] would ultimately pervert sporting events, saying that if legal notions were allowed to intrude into every level in the enforcement of rules of private [or even public] sporting events, there will result anarchy and chaos, as virtually every decision by an umpire, referee or sporting judge could be subject to question.

Let me recall a case for whatever it is worth.

Way back in the early 1980s, a damage suit was filed against the Philippine Soap Box Derby where I served as president and derby director. The damage suit was filed because I disqualified a participant for violation of a derby rule.

It took 12 long years before the case was decided, but in the end, the Supreme Court ruled in our favor, saying "the circuitous route the case has taken through our courts would have been unnecessary had private respon-

dents observed ordinary rules of sportsmanship and fair play."

The high court also said "the maxim that 'the judge's decision is final' simplifies sports adjudication to a degree which the larger arena of life does not ordinarily mirror. Nonetheless, it is a simplicity in procedure which we of the courts ought to altogether idealize or sometimes aim for."

Those who penned the landmark decision were Associate Justices Teodoro R. Padilla, Santiago M. Kapunan, Josue N. Belosillo, Regino C. Hermosissima and Hilario G. Davide Jr., who is now the Chief Justice.

Lawyer-sportsman Manuel Tomacruz was the lead counsel of the Philippine Soap Box Derby.

In the case of the PBA, all its players, including Taulava, are bound by a Uniform Player's Contract and the constitution of the PBA. These players should therefore respect and abide by the decisions of the PBA commissioner and the PBA Board of Governors.

In my view, the damage suit filed by Taulava against the Philippine Basketball Association should not have happened. And I'm glad to know that the Tonga-born Taulava is now singing a different tune and feeling sorry for having sued the PBA.

Taulava was suspended by Eala



CHOT Reyes wants to choose players freely.

PBA coaches back Chot

By June Navarro

REGAINING the country's respectable basketball stature in Asia won't be just a concern of national coach Chot Reyes and his staff.

The other nine coaches in the Philippine Basketball Association made sure of that as they pledged all-out support for Reyes in a meeting at Chateau 1771 restaurant in Pasig City Saturday night.

Reyes struck an agreement with the PBA coaches that will allow players who were earlier selected to train in the national team pool without the need to report to their mother ballclubs from Jan. 31-Feb. 20.

It will give PBA teams only two weeks to get hold of their players before the March 4 opening of the Reinforced conference.

"Their mother teams will sacrifice in a sense that the players can only get back two weeks before the opening," said Reyes.

Reyes and his colleagues were also looking for ways to schedule the practice sessions of the national team with minimal or no disruption at all to the tournaments of the PBA.

For starters, the PBA coaches have declared every Monday of the week for the entire year as "RP Day," a sign of commitment to the national team.

"Coaches even told me that if they are requested to train the team on some aspects of the game, whether in offense or in defense, they will gladly take time for the national team," said Reyes.

The group of coaches, Reyes stressed, will be a feedback mechanism for the team. They will try to brainstorm at least once a month, if possible, and review the performance of the team after each tournament it competed in.

Reyes also took to heart a suggestion that when it comes to pruning down the list of 40 candidates in the pool, the team should freely select the players it feels necessary without being restrained by a certain number.

"We will choose players freely and not limit ourselves on selecting only 14 or 18 players to the pool. The national pool is the entire PBA. The 40 players earlier named are not yet assured of slots in the team," he said.

Sta. Lucia Realty's Alfrancis Chua, Jong Uichico of San Miguel Beer, Siot Tanquingcen and Binky Favis of Barangay Ginebra, Ryan Gregorio of Purefoods, Shell's Leo Austria, Coca-Cola's Biboy Ravanes and Abot Castro, FedEx's Jojo Villa and Talk 'N Text assistant coach Ariel Vanguardia were present during the meeting.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala presided over the gathering and discussed the calendar of the second conference and how it would be synchronized with the RP team schedule.

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San Miguel sustains . . .

From page A25

Game 1 of their quarterfinal affair against the Aces.

Last night, it was Olsen Racela and Danny Ildefonso's turn to shine as they scored 20 and 17 points, respectively, most of them coming just as the Aces were staging a comeback.

Ildefonso delivered 11 points in the second quarter as the Beermen pulled away, while Racela's shooting in the fourth throttled a desperate Alaska charge down the wire.

The victory shoved the Beermen into the semifinals for the first time since the 2003 Reinforced.

And awaiting them will be sister team Barangay Ginebra, which will go into the best-of-five semifinal series enjoying a three-week break after emerging as No. 1 in the eliminations.

"It's been a while since we advanced to the semis," said San Miguel coach Jong Uichico. "With Ginebra coming off a long break, they will have fresher legs. But I don't know how they (Kings) will react to that. It could affect them either on a positive or negative way."

The Beermen also topped the eliminations of the last Fiesta Conference with a 16-2 record only to lose in the playoffs following a long rest.

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 97—Racela 20, Ildefonso 17, Belasco 16, Seligle 13, Hortiveros 12, Peña 9, Singson 5, Villoria 5.

ALASKA 86—Cortez 20, Hugnatan 19, Allado 11, Carliso 10, Thoss 9, Hawkins 8, Cablay 4, Duat 3, Felhi 2, Tejada 0.

Quarters: 26-24, 55-42, 77-60, 97-86

Second Game

PUREFOODS 90—Yap 16, Limpot 15, Espinosa 14, Raymundo 12, Artadi 7, Yee 7, Castillo 7, Laure 5, Evangelista 4, Simon 3, Hirabak 0.

SHELL 77—Mamaril 17, Dela Cruz 17, Ferreria 16, Calagulo 11, Alvarez 6, Cruz 6, Jackson 4, Sta. Maria 0, Bajar 0, Yapa 0.

Quarters: 20-18, 38-35, 62-58, 90-77

Dovelets clinch SLCUAA plum

BACOR, Cavite—The St. Francis Dovelets banked on the sizzling plays of its two aces to down University of Perpetual Help-Molino, 86-80, yesterday and clinch the Southern Luzon Colleges and Universities Athletic Association junior basketball crown here.

Carlo Berba fired 26 points and Reynan Malayao added 19 as the Dovelets took their fifth straight high school plum and qualified for the first time in the National Students basketball finals set next month in Dumaguete City.

Berba and Malayao combined for 16 points in the first 10 minutes as they helped the Doves grab the lead to stay, 23-13, at the end of the first quarter.

In the 14-under action, Colegio de San Agustin of Bifian, Laguna, turned back St. Francis, 73-71, for the midget division title.

Dave Sanchez led the San Agustians with 23 points, including a drive at the endgame which ensured the victory.

The San Agustians also won the battle for third spot in the junior division, beating St. Joseph Academy, 64-61.

"We are excited that we finally made it to the national finals. The boys look forward to tougher opposition," said St. Francis SLCUAA president Frank Viola.

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Hot Wizards cool Suns, nail 7th straight victory

WASHINGTON—Juan Dixon scored 13 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter and helped the Wizards to their seventh straight win, a 108-103 victory that sent the Phoenix Suns to their first three-game losing streak of the season.

The Wizards made up a 10-point, second-half deficit and pulled ahead with a 16-0 run in a game that had a rare MCI Center sellout crowd standing and cheering thunderously for much of the final minute.

"There's times when you're on the bench the whole game, you urge your teammates on, but you're not really a part of it because you're not out there contributing," Dixon said. "Me, getting an opportunity to play and be a part of it, it's a lot of fun. I'm enjoying it right now."

Gilbert Arenas scored 26 points, Larry Hughes had 22 points and 13 rebounds, and Antawn Jamison had 17 points and seven rebounds for the Wizards.

Amare Stoudemire scored 26 points and Quentin Richardson added 25 for Phoenix, which is 0-3 on its East Coast road trip.

Steve Nash, the NBA's assists leader, sat out after bruising his thigh in Phoenix's loss to Indiana the night before.

Timberwolves 92, Trail Blazers 84

In Minneapolis, Latrell Sprewell scored 25 points, including a pair of key 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, to lead Minnesota past Portland.

Kevin Garnett had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Eddie Griffin grabbed a career-high 18 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

The Timberwolves also took advantage of a thinned Portland frontline to gain the edge in the rebounding battle 44-32.

Pistons 99, 76ers 95

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Tayshaun Prince's short jumper with 24.5 seconds left put Detroit ahead and his two free throws sealed the Detroit's fifth straight victory.

Richard Hamilton scored 25 points for the Pistons, who have won 12 of 16 since falling to .500 on Dec. 11.

Allen Iverson had 28 points and 13 assists, tying a season high, for the 76ers.

Prince scored 19 points, Ben Wallace had 14 points and 12 rebounds and Billups added 12 points and nine assists.

Kenny Thomas added 16 points and 12 rebounds for Philadelphia.

Bulls 86, Knicks 84

In Chicago, Eddy Curry's layup with 2.4 seconds left gave Chicago a win over New York for its sixth straight victory.

The winning streak is Chicago's best since Michael Jordan led the team to 13 consecutive wins late in the 1997-98 championship season. The Bulls, who lost their first nine games this season, have won 12 of 15 overall.

Andres Nocioni set up the winning score by blocking Trevor Ariza's jump shot. Tyson Chandler saved the ball from going out of bounds and threw it blindly to Kirk Hinrich, who fed Nocioni as he raced up the floor. Nocioni then passed to Curry, who drove to the basket and put the Bulls ahead.



Chandler blocked Nazr Mohammed's shot with time running out to seal it.

Hawks 103, Bobcats 95

In Atlanta, Al Harrington scored 22 points, and Antoine Walker added 21 points and 11 rebounds to help Atlanta beat expansion Charlotte.

The Hawks led 88-65 with 8:51 left to play, but had to survive a late scare as the Bobcats cut the lead to single digits in the final minute. Jason Hart scored 13 of his 19 points in the final period to lead the comeback attempt.

Grizzlies 101, Bucks 82

In Memphis, Tennessee, Jason Williams had 25 points and eight assists, and Memphis used a team-record 13 3-pointers to beat Milwaukee.

Pau Gasol added 22 points and eight rebounds, and Bonzi Wells scored 21 points for Memphis, which won for the eighth time in nine games. James Posey, 4-for-7 from 3-point range, finished with 14.

Magic 85, Pacers 84

In Indianapolis, Hedo Turkoglu had 23 points and Grant Hill added 19 points and eight rebounds as Orlando held off a furious finish by Indiana.

Reggie Miller missed a chance to tie the game from the foul line with 3.3 seconds left and Jamaal Tinsley's desperation heave from half-court banked in, but it was ruled he shot after the buzzer.

Mavericks 98, Nets 93

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 26 points, including 16 in the second half after having X-rays on his left ankle, to lead Dallas past New Jersey.

Jerry Stackhouse had 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Michael Finley added 16 points to help the Mavericks snap a two-game losing streak and beat the Nets for the 10th straight time.

Jason Kidd had 10 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for New Jersey, the 61st career triple-double for the NBA's active leader. Vince Carter scored 29 points to lead the Nets, who lost their fourth in a row.

Rockets 73, Spurs 67

In Houston, Tracy McGrady scored 28 points to help Houston beat San Antonio for its season-high fourth straight win.

Yao Ming added 13 points and Dikembe Mutombo came off the bench for 15 rebounds, as the Rockets moved three games above .500 (20-17) for the first time this season.

Tony Parker led the Spurs with 21 points and six assists, while Tim Duncan had 18 points and 12 rebounds.

Cavaliers 84, Jazz 71

In Salt Lake City, LeBron James scored 10 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and the Cavaliers rallied from a 19-point deficit to beat Utah.

The Cavaliers outscored Utah 31-14 in the final quarter and held former teammate Carlos Boozer to just three points in the second half.

Jeff McInnis scored 24 points and joined James on a 13-0 run that put the game away.

Kings 99, Clippers 95

In Sacramento, California, Chris Webber had a season-high 36 points and 10 rebounds to lead Sacramento past the Los Angeles Clippers.

Peja Stojakovic made four 3-pointers and had 24 points, and Cuttino Mobley scored 13 points in his Kings debut.

Lakers 104, Warriors 102

In Oakland, California, Lamar Odom made a driving layup with 1.3 seconds left, and the Los Angeles Lakers beat Golden State to win their first game of the season without Kobe Bryant.

Odom had 27 points and 12 rebounds, and he drew a charge from Adonal Foyle with 12.6 seconds left to set up his final shot. Odom then got the ball at the top of the key, drove past Cliff Robinson and made a hanging layup to lift the Lakers to their fourth victory in five games. AP



SAN ANTONIO Spurs' Tim Duncan works to get by Houston Rockets' Yao Ming.

T'wolves look lost

THE MINNESOTA Timberwolves have fallen from grace and, amazingly, can't seem to find their way out of their own murky mess.

Last year, the Timberwolves posted the second-best record in the NBA with a franchise-high 58-24 record, and came within two wins of advancing to the NBA Finals. Thus, everyone in the land of 10,000 lakes rightfully expected grand things this year.

That especially rang true when Shaquille O'Neal—the ringleader of the Lakers team that eliminated the Timberwolves in last year's Western Conference finals—was traded to the Heat over the summer. But this season, the Timberwolves have played like they're

swimming in a tank filled with sharks.

In one of the strangest reversals in recent NBA history, the Timberwolves are closer to missing the playoffs altogether than gaining one of the top four seeds in the West. The T'wolves hit rock-bottom Jan. 5 when they were outscored by the expansion Bobcats 22-4 over the final 4:44 during a humiliating 102-84 loss.

"We're at a crossroads right now and we're just trying to fix it," Minnesota forward Kevin Garnett said. "Right now we're not playing grade-A basketball like I know we can."

Guards Latrell Sprewell and Sam Cassell are upset management didn't give them a contract extension before

Boxing champ a ball

HOUSTON—Inside the ring, Juan Diaz is poised and polished. Just 21, he owns the WBA lightweight title, boxing's youngest reigning world champion.

But at his parent's tidy brick home in Houston, Diaz remains a university student with a 10 p.m. curfew on school nights.

"He's a big baby," teases younger brother Jose. "Mom still has to take care of him like a child."

At 1.68 meters and 61 kilograms (5-foot-6 and 135 pounds), Diaz looks a bit like a schoolboy. He has a short haircut, peach fuzz that someday may form a full goatee, and no tattoos or jewelry.

His smooth, unmarked face and mild manner yield no hint of the violence he is capable of with his fists, a dichotomy that long ago earned him the nickname "Baby Bull." Diaz is a junior at the University of Houston, majoring in political science and hoping to attend law school.

He is a promoter's dream: Exceed-

ingly polite and thoughtful, but a fighter whose frenetic style fills seats and catches the attention of casual boxing fans.

"He is not your typical boxing story," said Carl Moretti, vice president of Main Events, Diaz's promoter. "People like to talk about new names and fresh faces in boxing. Well, here's one right here. He's an exceptional young man."

First defense

Diaz (26-0, 12 KOs) will make his first hometown title defense next Friday at the Reliant Center against Bill Irwin (42-5, 30 KOs) of Canada. Diaz, Houston's first world boxing champion since George Foreman regained the heavyweight crown in 1994, has had few problems learning how to balance being a local celebrity and an honor student.

"I'm so busy that I don't have time to think about what I'm not doing," Diaz said. "I enjoy what I'm doing. It comes naturally to

LA Lakers put Bryant on injured list

OAKLAND, California—The Los Angeles Lakers placed Kobe Bryant on the injured list before Saturday night's game against the Golden State Warriors, two days after the NBA's second-leading scorer sprained his right ankle.

Bryant is expected to miss about three weeks with the in-

jury, which occurred in the first quarter of the Lakers' victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Thursday. He had not missed a game this season.

Bryant didn't make the trip to Oakland, but spent much of the day calling his teammates from home with encouragement.

The Lakers activated rookie Tony Bobbitt from the injured list to fill Bryant's roster spot. Bobbitt, who played for Cincinnati, was signed as a free agent on Dec. 6, but went on the injured list with a strained lower back two days later without playing a game.

Sasha Vujacic, another rookie, replaced Bryant in the starting lineup against the Warriors. Vujacic has played sparingly this season, sitting out several games while healthy, but coach Rudy Tomjanovich chose the Slovenian guard over Jumaine Jones to make the start. AP



PITTSBURGH Steelers' running back falls after getting tackled and finds no way of getting up as several New York Jets players collapse on top of him.

NFL: Steelers edge Jets in overtime

PITTSBURGH—The Steelers had the NFL's best record this season at 15-1, an unbeaten rookie quarterback, and rarely were challenged at home. But they got all they could handle Saturday before eliminating the New York Jets from the NFL playoffs, 20-17 in overtime.

New York's Doug Brien missed two late fourth-quarter field goals, including a 43-yarder at the end of regulation. Then Jeff Reed made a 33-yarder to move the Steelers into the American Football Conference championship game, which they will host next Sunday. Reed has made 19 straight field goals.

"I tried to hit it harder because the first one didn't get there," said Brien, whose 47-yarder hit the crossbar. "Just didn't hit it very well."

"I'll be fine. I just feel bad for the guys that played so well, played so hard and came up short."

Ben Roethlisberger, the Offensive Rookie of the Year who won all 13 regular-season starts, had a poor game, throwing two inter-

ceptions. Reggie Tongue returned the first one 86 yards for a third-quarter touchdown and a 17-10 lead.

But the Steelers tied it on a 4-yard shovel pass from Roethlisberger to Hines Ward, and once they got to overtime, Roethlisberger took them from their 13 to the winning kick.

The Jets (11-7), who upset San Diego 20-17 last week, became the first team to play three straight overtime games. They got Santana Moss' 75-yard punt return TD, but did not have an offensive touchdown.

"After what we went through today, I think it's our time," Steelers linebacker Joey Porter said. "The way these circumstances played out, it's our time."

In Saturday's late game, Atlanta routed St. Louis 47-17.

On Sunday, Indianapolis is at New England and Minnesota visits Philadelphia.

Falcons 47, Rams 17

The Falcons (12-5) got big plays from nearly everyone, including, naturally, star

quarterback Michael Vick.

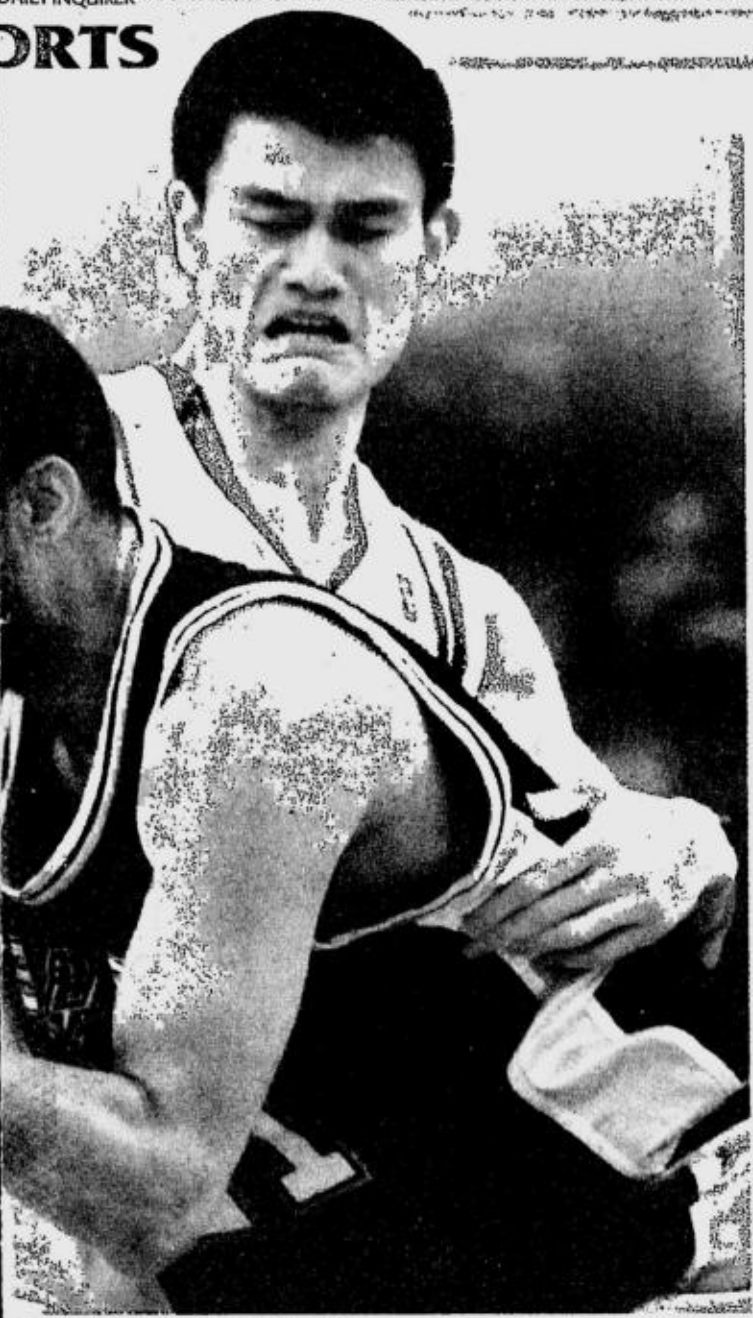
Vick threw two touchdown passes for 119 yards. Warrick Dunn set a 62-yard touchdown and Allen Rossett an NFL playoff record for punt return with a 68-yard runback for a score to tie his efforts. Rossum finished with yards on three punt returns—a 50.7-yard average.

Falcons coach Jim Mora, whose Jim is the only 100-win coach in NFL history without one postseason victory, got 1 in his initial try.

"I felt we had a certain calm about we went through the week," Mora said. "We were very calm tonight, we were hyped as you might imagine, being a home playoff game in a long time."

"I said our confidence would be out there."

St. Louis (9-9) won its last two season games just to make the playoffs when it beat NFC West champion Seattle last weekend, it became the first losing team to capture a playoff game.



Ming in a battle of the NBA's top big men.

Maruyama retains Sony lead

HONOLULU—Shigeki Maruyama didn't panic when he made a double bogey on the first hole and quickly lost his one-shot lead in the Sony Open. He simply figured he would get it back with a couple of birdies.

Turns out it only took one swing. Maruyama made a hole-in-one on the 185-meter (202-yard) fourth hole, part of a wild day at windy Waialae Country Club that kept his large contingent of Japanese fans thoroughly entertained until his 40-foot eagle putt on the 18th hole Saturday stopped on the edge of the cup.

The tap-in birdie gave him a 68, and left him in the same place he started—with a one-shot lead.

"It was a really bad start," Maruyama said. "I tried to think positive things. Fortunately, I had a hole-in-one. That really saved my game. I could think positive after that."

He was at 10-under 200. Brett Quigley saved par after driving into the TV compound and shot a 68, leaving him one shot behind with a great chance to end his 0-220 streak on the PGA Tour.

Not many are better prepared. Quigley spent the last month playing golf with his family—including uncle Dana Quigley on the Champions Tour, which means he played every day. He's trying to treat the first full-field event of the year as one of those marathon golf sessions with his uncle.

"We all have a tendency out here (to think), 'Oh my gosh, it's a PGA Tour event. You have to play perfect.' In reality, it's not even close to that," Quigley said.

Paul Azinger, the 2000 Sony Open champion, worked his low, penetrating ball flight to perfection in the wind. He was among four players who had a share of the lead at one point, finished with nine straight pars and had a 67 to finish two shots behind.

"If it's my time to do it, I'll do it," Azinger said. "I haven't gotten ahead of myself yet."

Among those in the large crowd following Maruyama was Isao Aoki, inducted last year into the World Golf Hall of Fame and the last Japanese player to win the Sony Open. Maruyama was 14 when he watched Aoki hole a wedge for eagle on the last hole to beat Jack Renner by one.

"I saw him," Maruyama said. "It gives me

great pressure."

He could also get that looking behind him on the leaderboard. Among the seven players within five shots of the lead was Vijay Singh, the No. 1 player in the world, who quietly surged into contention with a 67.

Singh might have been closer except for taking two shots to get out of a bunker on No. 16, courtesy of a plugged lie, and missing a 6-foot birdie on the last.

For most of the contenders, the first full-field event of the year is ripe with chance.

—Quigley is the only player among the top seven who has never won.

—Azinger finished No. 126 on the money list last year and does not have full status for the first time since he won Q-school 20 years ago.

Former Masters champion Larry Mize also has no status. He got a sponsor's exemption to the Sony Open, shot a 64 on Saturday and was at 7-under 203, along with Robert Gamez (68).

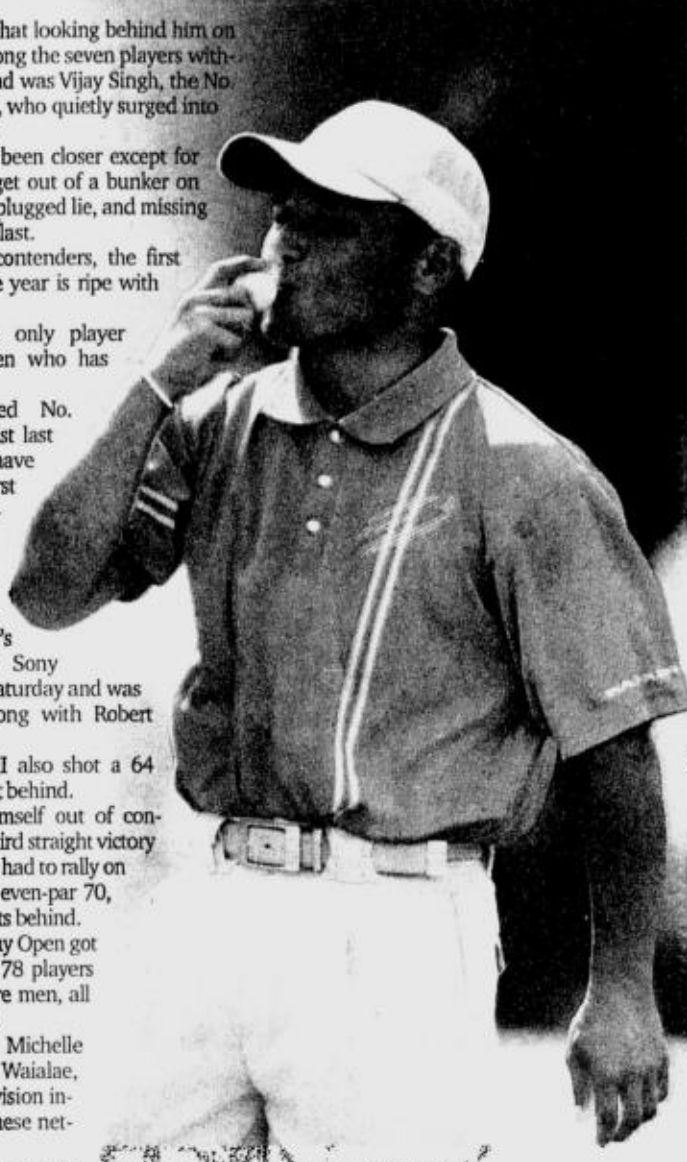
Charles Howell III also shot a 64 and was another shot behind.

Ernie Els took himself out of contention for a record third straight victory at the Sony Open. He had to rally on the back nine for an even-par 70, leaving him eight shots behind.

Otherwise, the Sony Open got back to normal—all 78 players who made the cut are men, all have driver's licenses.

Fifteen-year-old Michelle Wie showed up at Waialae, but only to do a television interview with a Japanese network.

"We're on our way to the mall," father B.J. Wie said. "She's meeting friends to go shopping."



SHIGEKI Maruyama kisses his ball after hitting an ace on the fourth hole.

after stellar season

the season, and one theory is that they're paying the T-wolves back by not giving their best efforts on the court.

Last year, Cassell averaged 19.8 points and 7.3 assists and shot 39.8 percent from 3-point range. So far this year, he's averaging 15.6 points and 5.9 assists and is shooting 27.1 percent from 3-point territory. Last year, Sprewell averaged 16.8 points and 3.5 assists, and this year he's averaging 12.5 points and 2.1 assists.

The T-wolves are only 5-10 against the Eastern Conference after racking up an impressive 24-6 mark last year against the East.

The T-wolves also dropped a 106-92 decision to Indiana six days after

the Pacers' roster was gutted following a Nov. 19 brawl with Pistons fans.

"You tell me if you shouldn't be criticized for not being able to go into Indiana and win after they lost everybody in that fight," said Kevin McHale, the T-wolves' vice president of basketball operations. "We run in there, give them a rope, pull them up, then jump off the cliff for 'em."

"Most of their frustration has been individual frustration, because these guys want to succeed," coach Flip Saunders said. "That's why we will succeed."

"It's just a matter of when we do it. Hopefully it will be sooner rather than later." *New York Times News Service*

ay, still follows curfew

me. I like keeping busy."

Diaz's days vary little. He wakes up at about 5:30 a.m. and lifts weights in the morning. He works out in the gym early in the afternoon, takes classes in the evening and studies until bedtime. That's been his routine, more or less, since he turned pro at 16.

Diaz began boxing at age 8, when his father dropped him off at Savannah's Boxing Club in Houston to keep him away from trouble. He was pudgy, already 49.5 kilograms (110 pounds), but even then could throw a left hook to the body.

In the next few years, Diaz excelled as an amateur. He won 105 of 110 bouts, collecting national and international championships.

He made the Mexican Olympic team in 2000—he has dual citizenship because his parents were born in Mexico—but the United States and Puerto Rico protested because Diaz was three months shy of the minimum age of 17. Denied a slot at the Sydney Games, Diaz turned pro.

Four years and 24 wins later, Diaz was fighting for his first title against 32-year-old Lavka Sim of Mongolia.

No record

"He's got no entourage, no record of beating up people in the streets, no hanging out in clubs—what kind of fighter can he be?" HBO analyst Larry Merchant said before the bout.

A pretty good fighter, it turned out. Diaz won a unanimous decision on July 17 at Reliant Center, beating his opponent to the punch, displaying skillful combinations and the grit to withstand an injured champ's desperate attack.

When the final bell sounded, there was little doubt Diaz had become a champion. He leaped into the arms of his parents and boxing family, soaking in the crowd's cheers of "Diaz! Diaz! Diaz!" After the celebration died down, Diaz greeted elated fans, and then it was time to dutifully return home. His mother, this time, did let him stay up past curfew. *AP*

MICHELLE WIE Hawaii teenage sensation still has lots to learn

HONOLULU—The disappointment of missing the cut by seven shots in the Sony Open turned into disgust as Michelle Wie walked slowly across the parking lot in darkness, waiting for her parents to take her home.

All her practice rounds at Waialae Country Club were of little use in the strong Kona wind that came from the opposite direction and changed a course she thought she knew better than anyone.

And then there was the putting.

"I hit so many putts that were right there. I mean, right there," she said. "I couldn't make anything."

Hmmm. Sounds a lot like Tiger Woods.

The 15-year-old paused, then broke into a big smile as she recalled all the putts Woods missed last week at Kapalua.

"Oh, I get it," she said. "That's funny."

Ernie Els came up with another comparison between Wie and Woods.

The Big Easy finished his second round Friday and glanced over his shoulder at the large leaderboard to the right of the 18th green, which had Wie's

name at the bottom. She was 7 over with six holes left, no chance of making the cut.

When asked about her future, Els went on the defensive.

"Look, let's put this in perspective," Els said. "She's 15 years old. She's a girl. She's playing on the PGA Tour. Tiger Woods, I don't think he ever made a cut on tour except maybe in the Masters."

Woods didn't play his first PGA Tour event until he was 16, missing the cut in the 1992 Nissan Open at Riviera with rounds of 72-75.

"Did I belong out there? No. I wasn't good enough," Woods said. "But it was an experience that I wanted to take advantage of. It proved a lot to me because I thought I played pretty good for me, at the time. I was 17 back from Davis (Love III), so I figured I needed a little work."

Wie made her PGA Tour debut last year at 14, when rounds of 72-68 left her one shot away from making the cut at the Sony Open.

"I definitely want to play next year," Wie said. "I just want to have another chance at it, because I know that I can do better than this." *AP*


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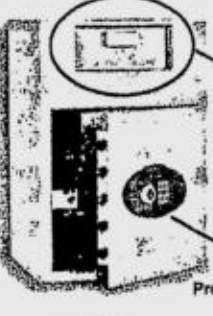
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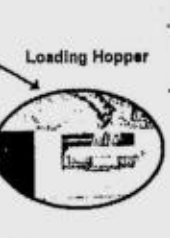
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HINGIS: Testing the waters.

Hingis to play in Thailand, comeback possible

MELBOURNE, Australia—The WTA Tour says former No. 1 Martina Hingis still plans to play in Thailand at the end of January, her first tournament since 2002.

Hingis, 24, will play the Volvo Women's Open in Pattaya beginning Jan. 31 to raise money for several Thai charities that help women and children who have suffered from abuse, homelessness and illness.

She was 22 when she retired in 2002 after operations on both ankles. The five-time Grand Slam singles champion was the youngest player to reach No. 1 at age 16 years and six months. She won a combined 76 singles and doubles titles during her career.

Top-ranked Lindsay Davenport said she wasn't surprised about Hingis' plans for a return.

"I was surprised that someone quit that

young who still, I thought, could have made a better comeback from all her surgeries if she'd given it more time," said Davenport. "I told her that."

"I thought she would come back, I think she's a good enough player," she said. "Whether she'll be the dominant force, if she plays full-time, No. 1, or if she wants to see where she would be, I don't know."

The WTA said Sunday that Hingis had thus far entered only the Thailand event.

"It could be a case of her testing the waters," said the WTA's Roger Gatchalian. "She's serious though. It's not just a hit and giggle."

Roger that, coach

Tony Roche knew that by accepting Roger Federer's coaching request, it would put him where he didn't want to be: on long-haul flights, and in the media spotlight. But he took the job—eventually—and Federer is pleased that he did.

Federer, who won the Australian Open,

Wimbledon and US Open last year, hooked up with Roche for two weeks in late December. It came after Federer went a year without a coach.

The pair have had little time to bond, Federer said Sunday on the eve of the Australian Open.

Roche, 59, coached former world No. 1 players Ivan Lendl and Pat Rafter.

Thanks Bec

A year ago, Lleyton Hewitt had just proposed to his then girlfriend Kim Clijsters on a Sydney harbor cruise. The pair split up in October and Clijsters is not playing at the Australian Open, where she was a losing finalist last year, due to a lingering wrist problem.

Hewitt has a new girlfriend—Australian actress Rebecca Cartwright—and they've been a steady item for about two months. On Saturday, Cartwright was in the stands when Hewitt won the Sydney International for the fourth time.

"It's the first time she's seen me win, so it's nice to not take too long to do it," said Hewitt.

Show me the money

Most athletes don't like to be too specific about who they see as their top rival. So when Jim Courier asked top-ranked Roger Federer about his chief threat at the Australian Open, the Swiss star responded with a stock answer of the next three men in the rankings—Lleyton Hewitt, Andy Roddick and Marat Safin—plus Andre Agassi, who doesn't play enough tournaments these days to contend for the top spot.

He pressed Federer, who initially resisted. Then Courier said if Federer gave him a straight answer, he would bid \$2,275 for a racket that is among three items that Federer has donated for an auction to benefit victims of the Asian tsunami.

"Hewitt," Federer quickly answered with a grin, committing Courier to the bid. AP

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Confident Federer leads favorites' list

MELBOURNE, Australia—Andy Roddick's ankle seems OK. Andre Agassi isn't expecting his wonky hip to get any worse. And top-ranked Lindsay Davenport thinks she's almost over bronchitis that restricted her tuneup for the Australian Open.

Agassi said the small tear in a tendon in his right hip didn't trouble him too much while he recovered from Saturday's two-hour workout against Tim Henman and he's a "100 percent starter" for the season's first major.

No. 1-ranked Roger Federer is starting the defense of his Australian title on a roll of 21 consecutive match wins on the ATP Tour and with 14 consecutive wins in finals.

After winning 11 titles in 2004, including three Grand Slams, and starting this season with wins at Qatar and the Kooyong Classic exhibition tournament—where he beat second-ranked Roddick in Saturday's final—Federer is one of the hottest favorites here since the tournament began in 1904.

So how confident is he for the centenary title?

"Well ... very!" said Federer. "I'm feeling great. I played fantastic at the end of last year and now in the beginning again—I see no reason why not to be confident."

The 23-year-old Swiss star is in the

same section of the draw as four-time winner Agassi, meaning the pair could meet in the quarterfinals.

Having top-ranked Davenport in the women's draw will restore some order after Belgians Justin Henin-Hardenne and Kim Clijsters—both of last year's finalists—and Jennifer Capriati, the back-to-back champion in 2001 and 2002, withdrew because of lingering injuries.

Serena and Venus Williams are back in a Top 10 that contains five Russians and, in a wide open draw, are strong chances of adding to their major titles. Serena beat Venus in the 2003 final here, then missed her title defense with a knee problem.

Second-ranked Amelie Mauresmo of France, who had to retire in her quarterfinal here last year, has a night match Monday against Australia's Samantha Stosur, who reached back-to-back finals in the last two weeks.

Federer has a tricky opener Monday against Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, one of the few men on tour who've beaten him twice on hard courts. Agassi will follow Federer on Rod Laver Arena—Melbourne Park's center court—against German qualifier Dieter Kindlmann.

Agassi hurt the hip on Thursday and had to retire from an exhibition match against Roddick, putting his status in doubt for the Australian Open. After losing to Henman on Saturday, he still wasn't

a certainty, but changed his mind Sunday.

"I'll be out there giving it everything I've got," Agassi told the tournament's host broadcaster.

Roddick and third-ranked Lleyton Hewitt are in the bottom half of the draw and have to wait until Tuesday to get their Open campaigns under way.

That's a relief for Roddick, who turned his ankle playing against Federer on Saturday and, although he says it's not bothering him, he could use the extra time for rehabilitation.

Hewitt lost to the eventual champion at all four Grand Slam tournaments in 2004—which was Federer in the Australian Open, Wimbledon and the US Open.

And while he agrees with assessments from Agassi and Roddick that Federer has taken tennis to a new level, Hewitt said it was only a matter of time before that dominance ended.

"Roger doesn't have too many rivals right now. He's definitely the favorite, no doubt," said Hewitt. "But, you know, he's human and guys like Safin in his half, Agassi in his quarter, there's tough players out there."

Hewitt said he wouldn't think about another showdown with Federer for at least a week.

"I'm still two weeks away from possibly playing him, so right at the moment I'm not thinking about Roger too much," said Hewitt. AP



FEDERER works out for the Australian Open.

Women's field a more wide open race Kwan makes history, wins ninth skate title



AMELIE Mauresmo prepares for practice. AP

MELBOURNE, Australia—No one's ever quite sure what to expect at the Australian Open—whether a player has taken advantage of the short off-season to get in better shape or if the holidays have packed on a few pounds and eroded the competitive edge.

Still, the question marks are even more abundant than usual in the women's draw as the year's first Grand Slam starts its centennial show Monday. It's shaping up to be the most open Open in recent memory.

Top-ranked Lindsay Davenport said 2004, when the four Slams all had different winners, proved that the art of predictions has become more difficult than ever.

"It didn't have to do with who was the bigger name or who was supposed to win; it was just whoever was left standing at the end," she said.

"It kind of proved that you really can't have a sure bet on who is going to actually come through and win. I think that might change if everyone at the top of the game is 100 percent healthy and competing."

Last year's all-Belgian finalists, Justine Henin-Hardenne and Kim Clijsters, already are out, sidelined by lingering injuries. Jennifer Capriati, who won Australian titles in 2001 and 2002, withdrew because of an ailing right shoulder that has troubled her since November.

Serena and Venus Williams, who dominated the game for a while and faced each other in the finals of four of six Grand Slams, are eager to regain peak form but haven't quite made it back after a spate of injuries that allowed other players to close the power gap and dispel their reputations as nearly invincible.

Serena said she's "really excited about the way things are going in my game—it's a pretty big, open draw." It doesn't hurt that Venus is her practice partner, either.

Davenport, who often thought of retiring last year due to nagging injuries, is coming off a bout of bronchitis after a bad knee forced her out of the Hopman Cup. She also faces probably the toughest first-round draw—former Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez, who has slipped to No. 43 but still holds an 8-7 edge in head-to-head meetings.

Second-seeded Amelie Mauresmo has hired a full-time physical therapist to help her avoid nagging muscle pulls like the one that sidelined her before her quarterfinal match here last year. Whether she can control her emotions at critical times is another issue as she seeks her first Grand Slam title.

Then there are the Russians. Four are ranked in the top six—and seven in the top 15—and all appear to be reasonably healthy. They have collectively won the last three Grand Slams, all as underdogs. AP

PORTLAND, Oregon—Michelle Kwan held up nine fingers and grinned at the camera. She has her place in history, a run as impressive for its longevity as its dominance.

Kwan won her ninth title at the US Figure Skating Championships on Saturday night, tying Maribel Vinson for the all-time record. She earned four more 6.0s, giving her 42 at nationals in the illustrious career that began more than a decade ago with a tiny 12-year-old who wasn't even old enough to wear makeup.

Now 24, Kwan is a beautiful young woman with one of the

most recognizable faces in the world. But she's as dominant as she's always been, with no one in the United States coming close to challenging her.

Certainly not Sasha Cohen, who once again failed to come through when it matters most. Cohen finished second after botching two jumps and was lucky to finish ahead of up-and-comer Kimmie Meissner, who made a bit of history herself with the first triple axel by a US woman since Tonya Harding.

Earlier, Johnny Weir won his second straight men's title. Olympic bronze medalist Tim Goebel was second.

Vinson won nine titles in the 1920s and 1930s, a mark that once seemed certain to stand. Gretchen Merrill, Tenley Albright and Peggy Fleming—they all won multiple titles, but none came close to Vinson.

But it's somehow fitting that Kwan was the one to finally reach the pinnacle. Her former coach, Frank Carroll, trained with Vinson, and Carroll would often tell Kwan stories about Vinson and the lessons she'd taught him. Vinson may not have lived to see Kwan, but she's had a hand in Kwan's success.

"There's a cosmic connection between me and Maribel," Kwan said.

Vinson died when the plane carrying the US team to the 1961 world championships in Prague crashed in Belgium. AP



MICHELLE Kwan proves she's unbeatable. AP

Chelsea stretches Premier League lead

LONDON—Frank Lampard scored twice and Chelsea won at Tottenham, 2-0, to increase the Blues' commanding lead in the Premier League to 10 points over Arsenal on Saturday.

Lampard scored on a disputed first-half penalty, and then clinched the victory with a second-half injury-time goal.

"We said from the start our intention is to win the Premier League, and we're looking forward to the next match," Lampard said.

Defending champion Arsenal slumped to a 1-0 loss at Bolton on a first-half goal by Stelios Giannakopoulos. It was Arsenal's third loss in the league this season—the Gunners also lost to Manchester United and Liverpool—but this one could be decisive.

"There's a long way to go and, of course, Chelsea's in a fantastic position," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said. "They can only lose it now."

It was a better day for Manchester United, which closed to within one point of the Gunners with a 1-0 victory over Liverpool at Anfield. United got at fortunate first-half goal from Wayne Rooney, and survived the last 25 minutes a man short for the win.

Man United's victory overshadowed the Liverpool debut of striker Fernando Morientes, who started after moving from Real Madrid on Wednesday. AP

SPORTSWATCH

Ming, Buhain head PSA Forum guests

FORMER First Lady Amelita "Ming" Ramos heads the list of special guests appearing in the first PSA Forum for the year 2005. Ms Ramos will talk about the 1st Philippine Marathon for Pasig River of which she is the chair of the organizing Clean and Green Foundation. Games and Amusements Board (GAB) chief Eric Buhain, chair of the marathon event, and his co-chair Tisha Abundo join Ms Ramos in the 10:30 a.m. session sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Colors and Pagcor and to be aired live over dzSR Sports Radio. Other guests in the weekly forum are Shell's Rey Gamboa and Ed Mapa along with Philippine Basketball League (PBL) commissioner Chino Trinidad. They will discuss the upcoming Champions' Cup.

Domanais leads Super Darts champs

JOSEPH Domanais of Unicorn-Pool Spot, Noemi Jaro of Terton, Joel Hizon of FDC and Nancy dela Cruz of Amber's Best shared honors as they topped the singles events of the Super Darts, a Darts Council of the Philippines (DCP) national tournament, at the Pearl Plaza in Parañaque City recently. Domanais, the country's No. 1 ranked player, displayed near-perfect form to rout surprise finalist Toto Andrade of Snipers-Pier 1, 3-2, 3-0, and capture the men's title of the National Open Singles Championship. Hizon upstaged Dhoc Macasquit of Lovables, 6-5, in the Philippine Cup Men's Singles. Jaro, a comebacking darter, beat Amber's Best's Edna Granada twice, 3-2, 2-3, 3-1 and 3-2, 3-1, in the NSC Finals. Dela Cruz humbled Baguio City's Rhea Mayngo, 5-6, in the Philippine Cup Women's Finals.

Alvarado takes third artists' chess title

RICKY Alvarado drew with poet Ed Orozco in the ninth and final round over the weekend to rule the 26th Philippine Artist Chess Championship at the Heritage House in Blue Ridge Subdivision, Quezon City. Alvarado, a theater artist at Polytechnic University of the Philippines, scored 8.5 points on eight victories and a draw to clinch his third title and the glass trophy designed and made by critically acclaimed sculptor Impy Pilapil. Erven Perlas and singer-composer Willy San Juan finished with seven points apiece but the former emerged as second placer via the winner-over-the-other rule in this one-day event organized by Artist Chess Club head Nestor Mata and environmentalist and former Olympiad veteran Odette Alcantara. Rounding out the top 10 were Orozco, The STAR's Joey Villar, Raul Medina, 11-year-old Marc Nazario, painters Lito Milan and Elmer Roslin, and Danny Santos. This annual tournament was officiated by international arbiters Bobby Bautista, National Master Erwin Carag and Joey Mosera with Manila Standard's Ignacio Dee as event director.

Cebuana Lhuillier reaffirms support

CEBUANA Lhuillier will extend its full cooperation to the Basketball Association of the Philippines and the Philippine Basketball Association in the formulation of a comprehensive national basketball development program. "This has been Cebuana Lhuillier's thrust ever since and we have been consistently striving for a unified approach to basketball development in the country," said sportsman-businessman Jean Henri Lhuillier. "We have to do this if we are to reclaim our rightful place among basketball powers at least in this part of the world. Jean Henri's Cebuana Lhuillier presently has a four-year program in place with the BAP. The clarification was issued in the light of PBA commissioner Noli Eala's recent statement in which he said that "even the Cebuana Lhuillier is showing signs of cooperation."

Milo 42K writing contest winners

FREELANCE sportswriter Lito Cinco led the winners in the recent Milo Marathon media writing contest with his piece, "More Than Just A Regular Running Event," which was published in the December issue of Manila Bulletin's Sports Digest. Cinco, who is also a columnist for the Inquirer group's tabloids, Bandera and Turnbok, received P10,000 for his feature article on the country's premier road running event. The Philippine Star's Abac Cordero placed second with his piece, "Old Champ Milo's King of the Road Anew," while People's Journal reporter Waylon Galvez came in third with his "Once More With Feeling." Cordero and Galvez won P7,000 and P5,000, respectively. Also earning honorable mention awards in the writing category for last year's Milo Marathon won by Roy Vence, were Manila Bulletin's Clyde Mariano, Manila Standard's Riera Mallari, Bandera's Mike Lee, Balla's Girlie Turmo and Imbestigador's Ann Oredo.

Roligon 4-cocker Part 3 kicks off

IT WILL be a long evening at Roligon Mega Cockpit today as the much-awaited Abot-Kaya Part 3 4-cock derby unfolds with 55 entries seeing action. A guaranteed prize of P450,000 is at stake in the one-day derby hosted by Roligon and sponsored by Thunderbird Platinum. Meanwhile, Roligon will celebrate its 15th year of derby promotion with the P4-million 15th Anniversary 7-Cock Derby. A 3-door 2.8-liter Pajero is also at stake in the event with an entry fee of P12,000 and a minimum bet of P5,500. The five separate 3-cock elimination rounds are set Jan. 29 and 31 and Feb. 2 and 5. Day champion prizes of P100,000 await the three-pointers in each elimination event. All those with two points or less in the preliminaries clash in the semifinals set Feb. 7 with a day champion getting P500,000. The 4-cock championship takes center stage at the start of the Year of the Wooden Rooster on Feb. 9.



PBA TIMEOUT

Red Bull's Enrico Villanueva shows his shooting form as he graces the opening of the PBA Timeout@Ever Malls at Ever Grand Central over the weekend. The event kicks off a seven-week long fair of fun and games where fans are given a rare chance to meet their favorite PBA players and teams at the Ever-Gotesco chain of malls. Also in photo are (from left) marketing services and communication manager Noemi Sta. Maria, Ever-Gotesco executive assistant to the president Joel Go, PBA commissioner Noli Eala, PBA kiddie fan Orven John de Guia, IMG's Princess Galura, assistant mall manager Charlie Cua, and Ever malls ad and promo manager Chi Arao.



OFF-ROAD DEVILS

Homer Dunca, Francis Lacson and Noel Dixon, with GSM Blue brand assistant Sol Jacinto, hold their giveaways after finishing in the top three of the 6-cylinder category of the first leg of the GSM Blue 4x4 Off-Road Challenge held in San Pablo City recently. Four-wheel-drive enthusiasts from all over the country competed in three categories—Open Novice Stock, 4-cylinder and 6-cylinder—including Arthur Azcuna, who, despite his physical disability, finished third in the 4-cylinder class. The races were backed by GSM Blue, Ad Staunch Communication Network and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

RP pugs fly to Hanoi for SEA meet

A THREE-MAN RP Alaxan FR Boxing team leaves for Hanoi tomorrow to compete in the 8th Southeast Asian Boxing Championships set Jan. 16 to 23.

The team, coached by Elmer Pamisa, is composed of light flyweight Lhyven Salazar, flyweight Warlito Parrenas and ban-

amweight Joan Tipon.

The three boxers, to be sent by Pacific Heights to the Vietnam capital with support from the Philippine Sports Commission, will pit their skills against the best from the Southeast Asian region as part of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap)

buildup for this year's SEA Games in Manila.

Salazar won the 2003 China International silver medal in his weight division while Parrenas was a silver medalist in the 2003 Goa India Championships and Tipon was a silver medalist in the 2003 Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

Tigresses survive PSC in classic five-setter

By Musong R. Castillo

SANTO Tomas won out in a classic, old-fashioned spike-fest yesterday, regaining the lead in the elimination round of the Shakey's V-League after a 25-19, 26-28, 25-18, 20-25, 15-12 decision over the Philippine Sports Commission squad at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Tigresses turned to their two most reliable offensive weapons to win six of the last eight points of the two-hour, five-minute match and improve to eight wins against a loss.

Roxanne Pimentel and Mary Jean Balse finished with 28 and 17 points, respectively, taking turns in hurting PSC, which lost for the second straight game and fourth in nine outings overall.

The victory broke UST's tie with La Salle, and it could prove crucial at the end of this phase with top seeding not only meaning the lightest foe in the semis, but also assuring that a meeting with the Legends could only happen in the finals.

As things stand, the decimated Legends could well wind up in third spot, which would mean drawing the No. 2 seed, and Santo Tomas coach August Sta. Maria was modest enough to admit this.

"No. 1 is important in the sense that we won't play them (Legends) in the semis," Sta. Maria said. "They are such a strong team with a lot of experience and they are getting better by the day."

Meanwhile, Letran climbed to a tie for fourth with idle Lyceum after a 25-23, 25-22, 25-22 victory over Far Eastern

in the first game.

The Lady Knights moved up to 4-4 in a tie with the Lady Pirates, just a win behind the Legends with four games left in their respective elims schedules.

From 9-10 in the final frame, Pimentel and Balse had a hand in four of the next five points Santo Tomas won to zoom to match point.

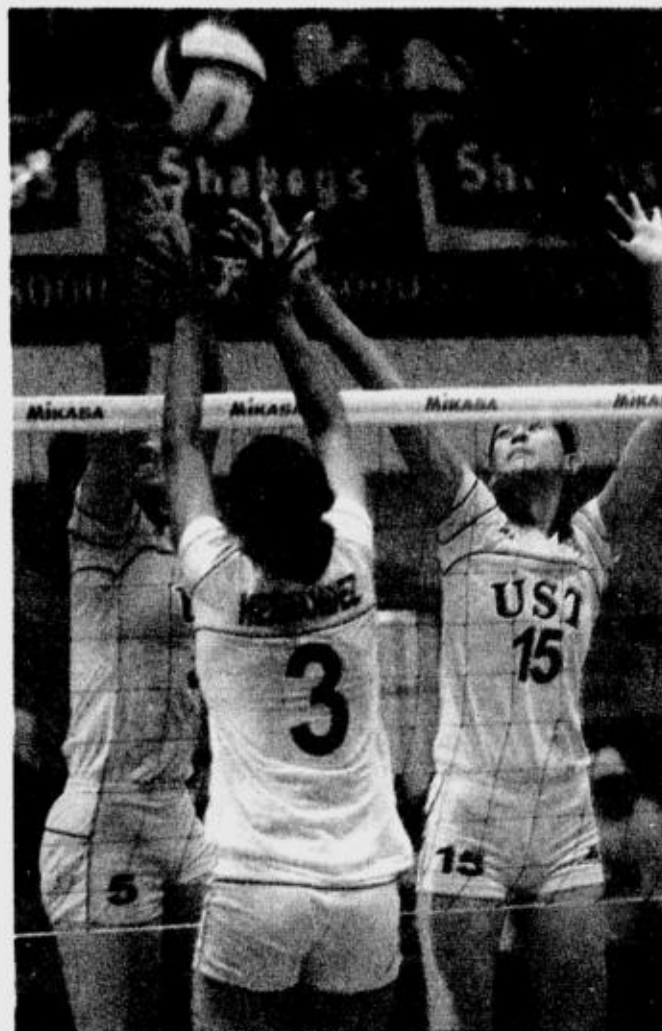
And after big Zenaída Ybafiez scored for PSC and a long Balse attempt made it 12-14, Balse drilled in the last of her kills which Rosemarie Prochina struggled to control.

Prochina, probably the most valuable player in the PSC lineup, had given the Legends that 10-9 lead with two consecutive kills.

Bernadette Gaspar led the Legends with 19 points, with Amelia Guanco, an enlisted woman in the Army, chipping in 18. Ybafiez and Prochina combined for another 26.

PSC coach Tatz Suzara was only able to utilize eight players, including Thelma Barina-Rojas for just three points in the third set.

The country's best player in the 1980s, Barina-Rojas showed up for the match with a heavily bandaged right palm, the result of an accident while doing household chores over the weekend.



MARY Jean Balse (5) and Brigit Inoferio (15) of Santo Tomas on the offensive against La Salle's Desiree Hernandez during their game last week. Balse teamed up with Roxanne Pimentel this time for 45 points to lead the Tigresses past the PSC Lady Legends. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

ABC Takbo Para sa Kabataan run slated

A FUND-RAISING fun run over the 3K, 5K and 10K distances will kick off at 6 a.m. on Sunday at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) complex for the benefit of poor grade school scholars.

Dubbed as Takbo Para sa Kabataan, the event is organized by the A Better Chance Foundation (ABC).

According to ABC director Tess Mercado, the foundation already has assisted about 15,000 students.

"We are staging this event because we need more help from other people and companies to ensure that more deserving kids get a chance to continue their high school education," said Mercado.

Prizes await the top three finishers in each of the three categories. There will also be special awards for the group with the most number of participants, the most colorful attire, shortest shorts, most poised, and most elaborately dressed runners.

Registration fee is P100. Registration centers are at 51 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, and at the back of the Cultural Center Main Theater.

For inquiries, call Baby at 0917-4568277 or Bren at 0921-6225797.

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SPORTS

Santa Ana Park races to record P4.4B sales

FOR the seventh straight year, the Philippine Racing Club Inc. (PRCI) set records in sales and proved its dominance in the horse racing industry by posting earnings of over P4.4 billion for 2004.

Gross sales were boosted by the hosting of several major stakes races at the PRCI's Santa Ana Park racetrack in Makati City. For the first time in the industry's history, cooperation

with foreign embassies resulted in the holding of the Australia Cup and the British Cup.

Blue-ribbon stakes

Other blue-ribbon events were the Sta. Lucia Realty Racing Festival, the 9th San Miguel Beer-Marho (Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners) Breeders' Cup racing festival, the Marho Pearl Stakes, the Philtobo (Philippine Thoroughbred Own-

ers and Breeders Organization) Mitra Cup Stakes, the PCSO (Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office) Presidential Gold Cup, the Philracom (Philippine Racing Commission) Open Classic Championship, and two legs of the Philracom Triple Crown.

Sales records

The Open Classic, held last Dec. 26, saw the setting of new sales records for the day, at

P47.2 million; and for the week, at P188.8 million.

Market share

PRCI ended the year with a 51.36-percent share of the market and a 14.5-percent increase over 2003 sales figures of P3.8 billion.

PRCI is presently operating 317 off-track betting stations (OTBs), which accounted for 88 percent of gross sales. Main

track attendance contributed 10.8 percent, while the TeleBet (telephone betting) share was 1.2 percent.

"We are highly gratified that our efforts to energize the horse racing industry are seeing positive results," said PRCI president and CEO Solomon Cua.

"For 2005, we are aiming to expand the number of OTBs nationwide and upgrade our TeleBet facilities.



CUA: Energized racing industry.

Experience vs youth in Bayawan triathlon

IT WILL be a battle pitting the veterans against the up-and-coming triathletes during the National Triathlon Championship slated Jan. 30 in Bayawan City in Negros Oriental.

Defending champions George Vilog and Fil-Am Arland Macasieb from New Jersey will be hard-pressed by young standouts Mark Yamoyam, Eldy Banluta and Mikki Quilala, all members of the national team.

Vilog, who won the national title in Guimaras last year, is also determined to reclaim his slot in the national team after he was suspended last year for disciplinary reasons.

Defending champion Alessandra Araullo, a veteran of last year's Asian championship in Subic, heads the list of entries in the ladies' race. She will be up against young stars Mimi Lucas, Alexandra Ganzon and LC Langit.

"The biggest advantage of our younger triathletes will be their ability to do sub-20 minute time in the swim leg while the veterans will rely on their strength in the bike and run legs," said TRAP president Tom Carrasco, who is giving cash incentives to record breakers on top of the record cash prizes offered by host city Bayawan.

The national championships will serve as one of three qualifying races for the national team in the triathlon, which will make its

debut in the SEA Games to be hosted by the country in November. The team will also compete in the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, next year.

The Subic International Triathlon this summer and another yet undetermined major race will be the other qualifiers.

The event, sponsored by Speedo, David's Salon, David's Day Spa, PowerBar, Asian Center for Insulation, Reliv and supported by SBMA, Philippine Sports Commission, POC-Sports For All Commission, the local government of Bayawan City and Guimaras, and Hotel La Corona-Manila, is expected to attract a big field from all over the country.

"We expect the race to be a fast one considering that the bike and run legs will be on flat and well-paved roads," said Carrasco.

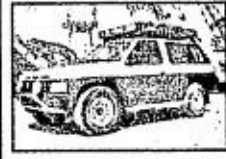
Registration is ongoing with entry forms available at the TRAP office in Makat at unit 1603 Cityland 10, De la Costa Street, TRAP Headquarters Building at Room 202, Alpha, Philsports Complex, Pasig City and at all Speedo Concept stores at SM Megamall, Glorietta 4, Alabang Town Center, Iloilo City and Cebu City.



ALESSANDRA Araullo (6) shadows Japan's Natsuki Matsumoto during the Asian Triathlon last year in Subic.

ROMY HOMILLADA

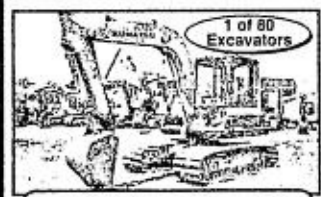
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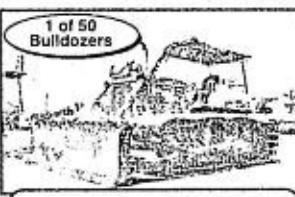
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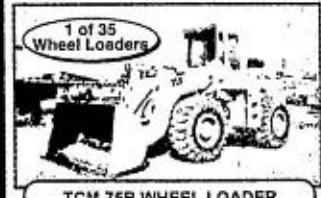
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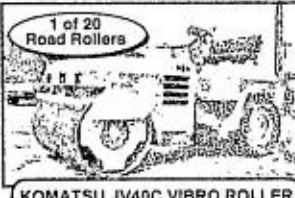
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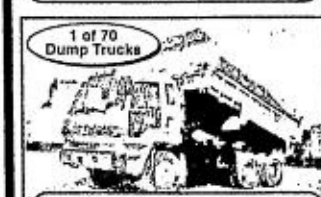
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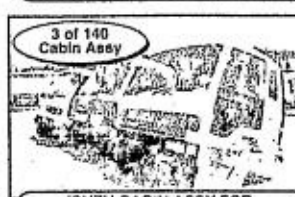
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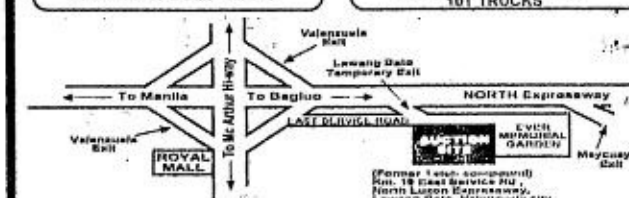
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

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Editor Louie C. Camino
Assistant Editor Emmie G. Velarde

THREE FACES of the boy:
gritty actor, charming young
man and, for his hopeful mom,
really just a kid.



By Nini Valera

ALMMA MORENO expects her son Mark Anthony Fernandez to be discharged from the drug rehabilitation center in Bicutan any time soon.

"I'd like the old Mark back, the one who was kind and sweet," Alma said in Filipino. "He changes personalities when he does drugs."

Mark, who turns 26 tomorrow, has been in rehab for drug abuse for more than a year now. This is the longest time that Mark has been in rehab, according to Alma, who had hoped to have her son back last Christmas or on his birthday.

"He's okay," Alma said of Mark, her son by actor Rudy Fernandez. "He has a program that he has to finish."

She admitted she's blaming herself a little for what happened to Mark.

"I should have believed in Rudy, who did not want Mark to be in the movies," she said. "But I felt for my son when he told me he wanted to be an actor."

"I know I am not perfect; neither is Rudy."

She said Mark bore the brunt of her troubles. After Alma married comedian, TV host and former Parañaque

mayor Joey Marquez, Mark was shuttled between her household and Rudy's.

"Since he was a kid, Mark has had two sets of families," she said. "One household was run differently from the other. He never had just one family. He was always shared. When Mark was with me, Joey and I had a different set of rules, and Lorna [Tolentino, Rudy's wife], had her own household rules. He might have been confused."

"I told Mark he's the only one who could control himself. No matter how many times you bring him to rehab, if he doesn't want to change, nothing will happen to him."

Third time around

But Alma is happy that Mark has learned computers while in rehab.

"The good thing about this is he finished a computer course in the rehab center," she said.

Mark has been in rehab three times, she said, but this spell in Bicutan has been the toughest for him.

"The other rehab centers were sosyal," she said. "They were also good, but a bit expensive. It's stricter in Bicutan, and that's good so Mark could feel what it's like to be a drug dependent. We also have to pay for his stay there—for food, for his computer course, even for his basketball uniform. If you want to give him extra food, you have to get it from the canteen and pay for it. You can't bring him extra meals."

Alma said she could not pinpoint the exact reason why her son got hooked on drugs.

"I refer to him as a victim of drugs," she said. "One reason why he probably tried drugs was he was earning money at a young age. When he got hurt in love, he could easily turn to drugs."

Never too late

Mark is also the type who would make other people's problems his own burden, according to Alma.

"My problem becomes Mark's problems," she said. "Vandolph's worries also become his problems. He is so sensitive that way and he gets depressed with problems. I wished he got my strength."

"But it's not too late for him. He told me on the phone that he has really changed. He told me that he wants to work when he gets out. He also wants



to be in business. I just agree with whatever he says. We could talk about these things later."

"I told him he has nothing to prove to other people, that he must change for himself and not for other people."

Alma was the one who had turned Mark in after she felt that he had been using drugs again. She had called up Rudy and told him of her decision, and he agreed that was the best thing for their son.

Mark Anthony was in the gym when staffers of the rehab center came to pick him up. He did not know what was happening, but he went with them willingly, said Alma.

A mother knows

She said she got wind of Mark's drug use again when he acted confused.

"When we talked, we would agree on one thing, but he would change his mind the next day," she recalled. "So I knew then that he was doing drugs again. If you're a mother, you would sense that something is happening to your son."

She denied that Mark was violent to his wife Melissa shortly before he was taken to rehab.

"He never beat her up," she said. "I know this because they live with me. Melissa is living with me right now. She and Mark have a child, Cameron, who just turned 1."

One of the most sensitive actors of his generation, Mark was at the peak of his movie career and was on his way to becoming the next Christopher de Leon when drugs took hold of him. A much-publicized breakup with his then-girlfriend Claudine Barretto took him to the depths of despair and worsened his drug use.

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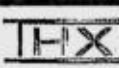


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A22

ENTERTAINMENT

MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 2005

Ethiopia big bash to mark Marley's 60th

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia is preparing a massive party next month to mark the 60th birthday of late reggae superstar Bob Marley, the first time the annual event has been held outside the singer's native Jamaica.

Some 200,000 people are expected to attend the giant celebration featuring

concerts from scores of African and international musicians that will start five days before Marley's Feb. 6 birthday, organizers said Friday.

Marley's widow, Rita, chose Ethiopia as site of this year's commemoration "Africa Unite" for symbolic reasons, Desta Meghoo-Peddie,

president of the Bob Marley Foundation told reporters here.

Not only is former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, born Ras Tafari, the spiritual leader of the Rastafarian movement that Marley embraced and popularized with his music; Addis Ababa is home to the African Union.

"It was always Bob Marley's desire to return to Ethiopia and to be a Rastafarian," Meghoo-Peddie said.

No exhumation

But she adamantly denied widespread reports that Rita Marley intended to exhume her late husband's remains in Jamaica and rebury them on Ethiopian soil.

"There is no plan to return the remains of Bob Marley to Ethiopia on Feb. 6," she said. "No body is being exhumed."

Marley, famed for hits such as "No Woman No Cry," died of brain cancer at the age of 36 in 1981 but his music remains hugely popular around the world, especially in the Caribbean and Africa.

The highlight of the monthlong festivities will be a gala concert on Feb. 6 that will feature the Marley family, Senegalese musicians, and American calypso king Harry Belafonte, organizers said.

Proceeds from the sale of CDs and DVDs from the concerts will be given to charity with a portion set aside for Somali victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami. AFP

MOVIE GUIDE

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Kitchie hit turns platinum

KITCHIE NADAI'S hit, "Wag Na Wag Mong Sasabihin," continues its reign on FM radio stations Magic 89.9, 99.5RT, 97.1WLS, 101.9 WRR and other MOR stations across the nation.

The single has propelled Kitchie's 10-track album to platinum heights, making it the No. 1 selling OPM album in Odyssey, Music One, Radio City and SM record bars for two consecutive weeks now. It has also become the theme song for the Korean soap, "Lovers in Paris."

Another single off the collection, "Bulong," is starting to make waves.

Kitchie Nadal's No. 1 debut album is distributed by Warner Music Philippines and is available in all music stores and record bars nationwide.

VIEWFINDER



Nestor Torre's Viewfinder is on Metro page 1

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GELLI DE BELEN

Shawled out

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan**G**ELLI de Belen says a lot has changed since she became a mom.

"For one, I seldom go shopping nowadays," the young actress and television host tells *Out of the Closet* during this interview in her Quezon City home with her husband, singer-actor Ariel Rivera, and their two sons, Joaqui, 6, and Julio, 4.

"I'm more practical when it comes to buying things for myself," the young mom says. "I stopped buying pricey clothes and shoes when I became a mother. I could use the money to buy things that my family needs."

OUT OF THE CLOSET

Accessories. "I love shawls. I have them in different colors and styles. They're very versatile. I wear them on 'Sis' in different ways, all the time. I wear them as tube tops, or skirts. I even wear them on my head."

"I can wear a white shirt and accentuate it with an orange shawl. I just wrap the shawl around my neck and I look dressed up."

"I can wear a simple tank top and drape the shawl over my shoulders and I look like a fashionista. I can even tie a shawl to my small sports bag for more formal look."

"You know what? Buy what you like. Printed shawls, plain-colored shawls—they're all okay. It's really how you want to wear them. But when it comes to the fabric, the thinner the better. Shawls in thin fabrics are more flexible. And they're perfect for our warm weather."

"Brooches are my thing now. I got most of them at Folded & Hung (F&H). I have them in all colors. An inexpensive outfit can look pricey if matched with the right accessory."

"I also have lots of beaded stuff. I used to have a sponsor for these things, but now I get them from *tiangges* and friends. [Elder sister] Janice and my mom make beaded pieces once in a while."

Tops. "I like white shirts. They may be plain

HOW TO DO IT. Tie a yellow shawl around your neck (far left), around your shoulders or around your waist—and you get a new look each time.



but they look clean. My current favorites are from Banana Republic and British India. I have lots of white shirts. Right now, I use almost 10 pieces, of different brands and different styles."

"I get almost all of my clothes from Folded & Hung. Their shirts are very flexible. Their fit is also nice. The top I'm wearing is from F&H. I like it because I can pair it with jeans or a skirt. When it comes to designs, the plainer the better for me."

"This very colorful long-sleeved shirt is by Randy Ortiz. I like it because of the colors, a combination of yellow, orange, white and black. Randy has been my designer since I was 18. He also made my wedding gown. I

don't need to explain much to him."

Formal wear. "I love the black suit that Randy made for me. It's so versatile that I could wear the coat with a pair of jeans or a skirt. I've probably worn this 10 times already. But I first wore it for the station ID of GMA 7. It's a classic."

Skirts. "My favorite denim skirt does not go out of style. It's long and sexy. I've had it for two years now. I think I can use it for 10 more years. Normally, I match it with boots."

Pants. "This pair has been with me since 1993 and I still wear it. It's inspired by soldiers' camouflage uniforms. I bought it in the States. It fits well, it's comfy and it's timeless."

SHAWLED/A2-4

SHAKEY'S SAYS, "SIZE DOES MATTER", INTRODUCES MONSTER MEATBALLS!

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NOTHING SHAKES LIKE





WHITE PLAINS. Her white shirt gets a lift from a black obi and a red shawl worn as skirt.



BEADING SESSION. She also wears beads as a belt and as a necklace.



COVERUP. Her camouflage jeans have been with her since 1993.



RANDY'S RAINBOW. Many of her clothes are by Randy Ortiz, like these colorful stripes.

Shawled out

From page A2-3

"When you buy jeans, make sure you try them on first. For example, I measure my jeans according to my hips. Even if I'm a size 26, I buy a size 29 because it fits my hips well. Filipino women, you see, are naturally pear-shaped.

"I like the straight cut because I can play with it. I can wear it with boots, stilettos, or with rubber shoes. Flared jeans don't always go with everything.

"I don't usually care about the price or the brand of the jeans. It's really how they look on me. I can wear a pair of denims that costs P500 and make it look like it cost P5,000. This means that even if you wear a P7,000-pair, if it doesn't look good on you, sayang lang.

"Folded & Hung has the best fitting jeans. They're not too expensive. Diesel jeans are nice, too. Expensive doesn't always mean good-looking."

Shorts. "I love wearing shorts because I love going to the beach. But I don't like those really, really short shorts that are in fashion now. My favorites are pieces from Old Navy."

Dresses. "I don't wear dresses much. If I need to, I have a few pieces that Randy made for me. I wore the green halter gown when I hosted the Urian awards show. I like it because it's made of soft material. There's nothing fancy about it. For me, less is more."

"My other favorite is an orange dress, also by Randy. It's very sim-

ple, pero may dating [but it looks impressive]."

Shoes. "I love wearing boots. My current favorite is a brown pair. Boots are very easy to manage. You just have to make sure they are kept away from moisture. When the leather gets wet and then dries up, it tends to crack. You can buy a moisturizer for boots."

"Boots are best worn from December to February. After that, you should be wearing strapped sandals or pumps because it's already summertime."

"I have lots of high heels, but this black pair is memorable because I bought it in an ukay-ukay shop for only P500. I bought it with two skirts and a denim jacket."

"I'm guilty of buying sandals that look good on my feet but aren't necessarily comfortable. Kahit mamatay pa ang kuko!"

"I don't believe in buying expensive shoes. If you notice, most of my shoes are locally made. My reason is that women's shoes change styles fast."

"Slippers are what I wear when I go to the beach with my family. We were in Boracay last Christmas. I didn't bring any shoes. I wore slippers throughout our stay."

Jackets. "For places that are really cold, like Canada, I just borrow jackets from relatives who live there. We don't sell winter jackets in the Philippines, although you can probably buy some at the ukay-ukay. It's more practical to borrow. I rarely need

SHAWLED/A2-7

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COLD FEET. Boots are best worn from cool December to February, she says.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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RPN 9		Golf Power	Auto Extreme	Pelorama		Road Trip	Simple Life	Smackdown		Medical Investigation		CSI: Miami		Japan Video Topic				The Working President	Ugnayan
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Solar	Tough Enough	WWE Allstar		WWE Smackdown		Romeo	Girls in Love	My Dad The Rock Star	Drake & Josh	WWE Bottomline		WWE Allstar		Double Decker					
Nickelodeon	Double Decker					Solving The Teenage Witch	Take 5	My MYX	What I Like About You	SpongeBob SquarePants		Danny Phantom	All Grown Up	MYX Presents For Love Or Money					
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backstage	Pop MYX		Take 5	Meet My Fats	NYC Hi Chart		My Life As A Teenage Robot		Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Presents For Love Or Money					
ETC		Dateline						NYC Nightly News											
Cinema One				Sana Dalawa Ang Puso Ko				30 Seconds To Fame											
Studio 23								30 Seconds To Fame											
AXN		The Amazing Race		The Amazing Race				30 Seconds To Fame											
Star World		The Apprentice						30 Seconds To Fame											
CNN	Design 360	World News	International Correspondents	World News	The Daily Show			World News	World Sport	World News				World News					
National Geographic	On Assignment	Innovation																	
Solar Sports	TV Shopping																		
Lifestyle Network	Date With Design	Ground Rules																	
HBO		Shrine (2:50 PM)																	
Star Movies																			
Cartoon Network	What's New Scooby Doo?	The Detective Squad																	
ESPN		Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball																	
Disney Channel	Potomac And Dragons	Sabrina's Secret Life	The Legend Of Tarzan	Wicked Science	Viva S Club														
Cinemax	One Way Out																		
Hallmark Channel		Word Of Honor																	
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries																	
MTV Philippines		Non-Stop Hits																	
Sports Plus																			
EWTN	St. Catherine Of Siena	Angelic (2:15 PM)	Pac 10 Arizona @ Stanford	Children's Rosary	Faith Factory														

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat pangmulat

TUWING HUWEBES

pagkatapos ng

American Idol

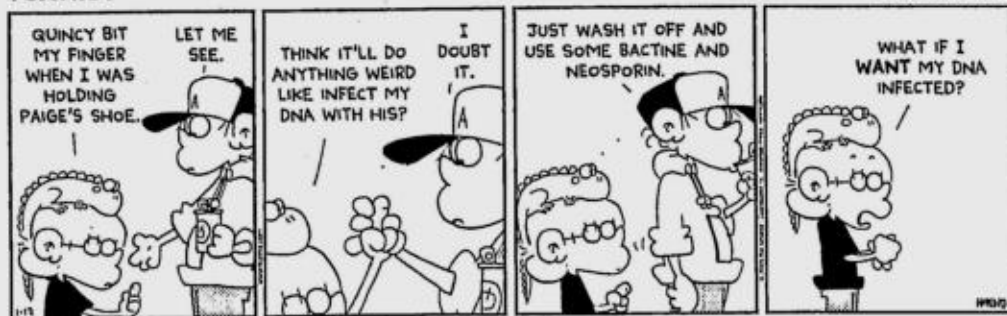
Ating kabalitaan

Cheri Mercado

Dito lang sa



FOXTROT



BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN



BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN



BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY



BY R.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES



BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS



BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY



BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY



BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You like to express yourself in a forceful, colorful way. (Others love this about you.) You understand the human condition because you're a people-watcher. You know what makes others tick. You are uninhibited and physical. Expect increased solitude in the year ahead so that you can learn something important. Birthdate of: Jim Carrey, actor; David Caruso, actor; Muhammad Ali, boxer.

- ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** Life is good today because you truly enjoy the company of others. Whether you're talking to close friends, partners or strangers, you feel an easy, sympathetic give-and-take.
- GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** Romance, love affairs, vacations and fun times are where it's at for your sign this year. What can you do today to make your life more enjoyable and fun-loving?
- TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** Never forget how much you can improve your job this year. Today is one of the days when you can push your job in a new, improved direction. Go for it!
- CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** This is the year to improve your real estate scene! You will also beautifully enhance the harmony you enjoy with your family. Today you see how this actually works.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The secret to your success this year is your positive state of mind. If you think like a winner, you'll be a winner. Expect a miracle, and it just might happen!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Because this is a year where you will increase your earnings, be alert to every opportunity to do so. Today you should trust your moneymaking ideas. They could pay off!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have a little bit of extra luck today. In truth, luck is just being ready for opportunities when they occur. Therefore, be ready to jump if something looks good!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): A peaceful inner world will promote a peaceful outer world as well. Be receptive to suggestions about how to calm your mind and increase your compassion for everyone.

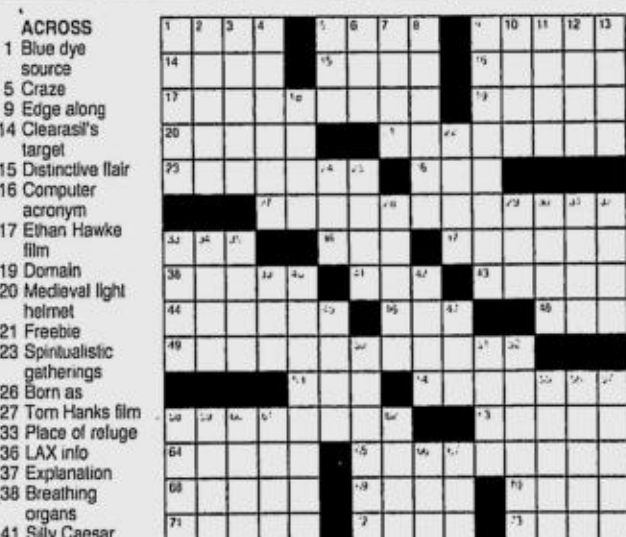
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Accept all invitations that come your way today. Be sociable! Your popularity increases this year, and today, in particular, is a great example of this.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you want to advance your career, then you might be able to do so today. Duties to travel or get more training are likely. Say "yes"!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't hesitate to share your opinions about philosophy, religion and politics today. People want to know what you have to say. (You're modern and very much ahead of your time.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your partner might earn more today or benefit you in some way. In some manner, you will get little goodies through others. (Just say "thank you.")

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Alan P. Olschewsky
Huntington Beach, CA

1/17/05

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

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01/17/05

- ACROSS**
- Blue dye source
 - Craze
 - Edge along
 - Clearasil's target
 - Distinctive flair
 - Computer acronym
 - Ethan Hawke film
 - Domain
 - Medieval light helmet
 - Freebie
 - Spiritualistic gatherings
 - Born as
 - Tom Hanks film
 - Place of refuge
 - LAX info
 - Explanation
 - Breathing organs
 - Silly Caesar
 - Athenian lawgiver
 - WWII marauders
 - Lanka precursor
 - Lubricate
 - Steve Martin film
 - Ruby or Sandra
 - Proverbs
 - Instinctive
 - Juan's winter month
 - Atlantic or Pacific
 - Anthony Hopkins film
 - Smallest possible
 - qua non
 - Northeast
 - Mississippi quartet?
 - Romanov title
 - Building additions
- DOWN**
- Muted trumpet effects
 - Earth pigment
 - Jungian soul
 - Locking lever
 - Ump's cohort
 - King lead-in
 - Band of hoods
 - Locomotive
 - Concealed
 - Conception
 - Kind of poker
 - "Damn" Yankee's vamp
 - TV award
 - White on metal
 - Swear
 - Very wide shoe
 - Some NCOs
 - Bump the bat
 - Spoil the finish
 - Aoki of golf
 - Focal points
 - Organic compound
 - Grad
 - July birthstone
 - Dial control
 - Guy's sweetie
 - School kids
 - Dull
 - Tarot user
 - Climbing vine
 - Publisher
 - William Randolph
 - Pitcher with a big mouth
 - Period of immaturity
 - Imperial
 - Whimsically comical
 - Units of loudness
 - Mouselike rodent
 - Clinches
 - Red and Black
 - Assignment for the DA
 - Island garlands
 - Genetic letters
 - Aachen article

MIKROKOSMOS



BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN



BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE



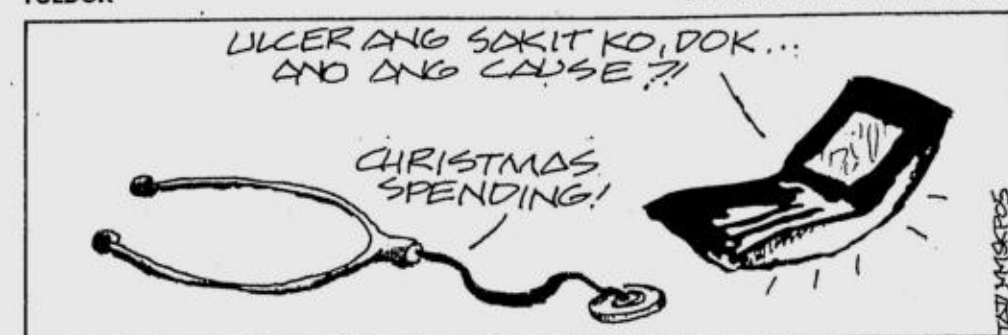
BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS



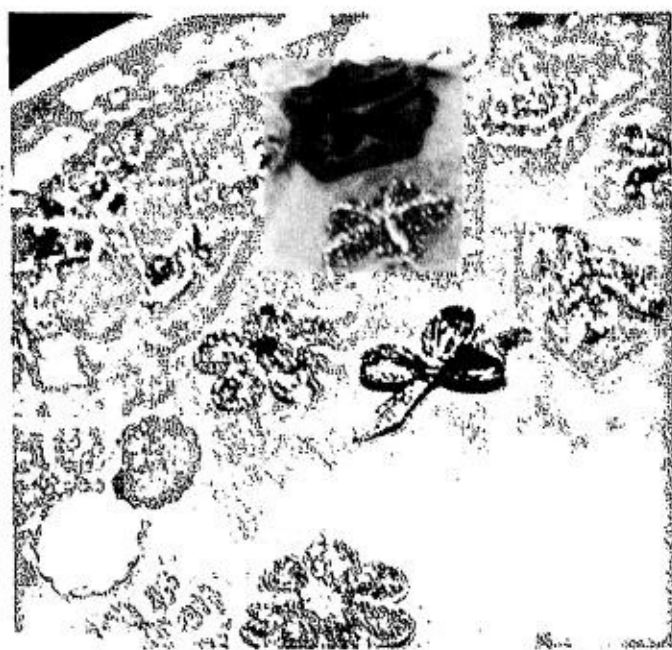
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK



BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

THE P5,000-LOOK. She can wear a P500-pair of denims and make it look like it cost 10 times that much.



BROOCHING THE SUBJECT. She can also make an inexpensive outfit look pricey, thanks to accessories.



QUICK CHANGE. She avoids buying expensive shoes because styles change fast.

Shawled out

From page A2-4

them anyway. "The jackets I use here are the plain cotton and flannel types. My favorites are in orange and powder blue, from Old Navy. Of course, you have to have a denim jacket, too. It goes with anything."

Bags. "I don't buy expensive bags because they easily go out of style. When I was younger, I would buy Gucci and Ferragamo. But then I thought, what would I do with them if they were no longer in fashion? I stopped buying them when I got married and had kids. I could use the money to buy things for my family instead."

"Fortunately I get Folded & Hung bags for 'Sis.' I don't really have to buy that much anymore, except maybe for the classic pieces. They're sort of expensive, but I can use them for as long as 10 years."

Time for herself

Gelli says she has more time for herself now that her two kids are older.

"Hindi na sila alagaan [They don't need as much close attention as they used to]," she says. "They eat and take baths by themselves. I can even take them around with me. There was a time I couldn't leave them long enough to let me take a bath."

Gelli says she can now hit the gym, do Pilates and taekwondo, and play badminton whenever she likes.

"I can also go to the parlor more often," she says. "But the best thing about it is that I can work now. I hope to have more interesting projects this year. Right now, I'm very happy with the way my shows are doing. I hope they last long."

Gelli hosts the top-rating GMA 7 morning show, "Sis," together with sister Janice and Gelli's best friend Carmina Villaroel. "Sis" goes live only on Wednesdays and Thursdays, according to Gelli.

Gelli's other show—"Nuts Entertainment" with Joey de Leon, Jano Gibbs and Anjo Yllana—tapes its episodes every Thursdays.

bathroom

From the makers of DUDA/DOUBT Grupong Sinehan Inc. comes another Crisaldo Pablo's digital movie about love and relationship.

Starring: Jet Alcantara, Andoy Ranay, Rey Pumalay, John Lapus introducing Ray An Dulay

JANUARY 19

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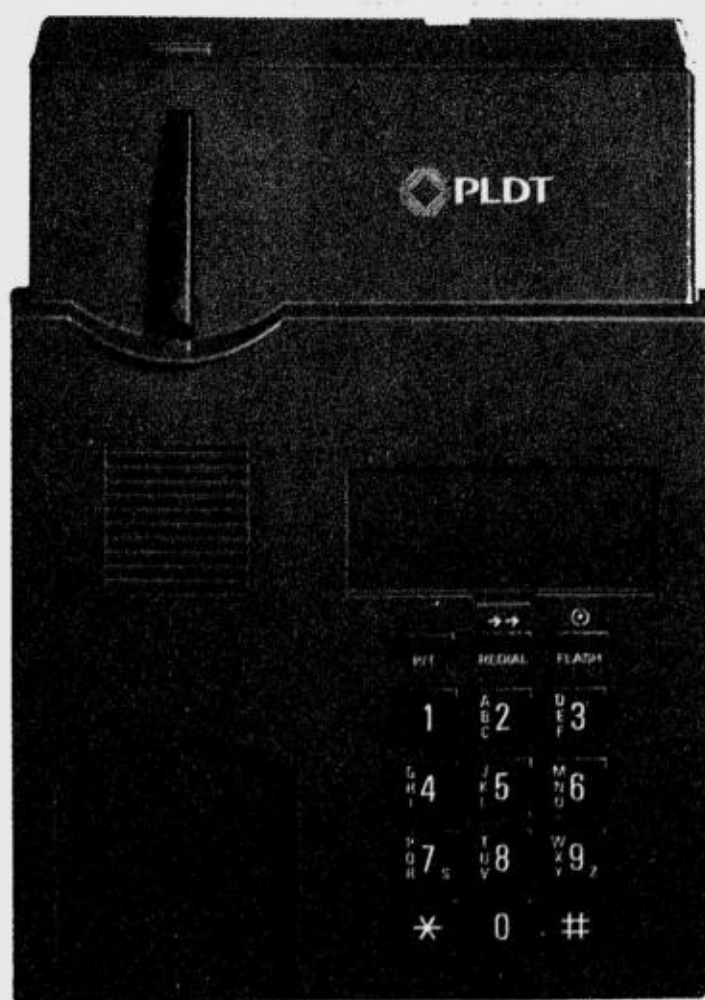


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GOLDMINE AGENT

Telesult Subscriber

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Free P150 worth of Load on existing Telesult line

Note: Credits/loads will automatically be credited to the account of the Goldmine Agent and will expire after one (1) month. Unused credits/loads will not be carried over to the succeeding month.

4. To qualify for the cash prizes at the end of the promo period, Goldmine Agents should have at least fifty (50) approved and installed subscriptions. All qualified Goldmine Agents will be ranked according to the most number of approved applications and awarded the following:

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Diamond Category:
Top 6-15 / Php 150,000
Gold Category:
Top 16 - 25 / Php 75,000
Ruby Category:
Top 26 - 35 / Php 50,000
Silver Category:
Top 36 - 45 / Php 20,000
Bronze Category:
Top 46 - 55 / Php 10,000
Pearl Category:
Top 56 - 65 / Php 5,000

5. Promo period is from January 10, 2005 to May 10, 2005. Deadline for submission of referrals with complete required documents is on May 10, 2005, 5:00pm.

6. Successful new applications credited to the account of the Goldmine Agent are non-transferable.

7. The Goldmine Agent is not an employee of PLDT. He is not authorized to collect money or any other monetary form from the telephone applicants.

8. All existing promos at the time of the application shall apply to the applicant. PLDT will confirm availability of every line application by mailing an official notice to the subscriber. PLDT will install the line within five (5) days from receipt of payment. All subscriptions are covered by an 18-month contract or lock-in period. Pre-termination rates of P2,500 apply.

9. Standard policies of PLDT on Credit and Collection shall apply. PLDT reserves the right to disqualify any Goldmine Agent from the Program if any violation is committed on existing policies on subscription, credit and collection and/or commit acts of fraud.

See flyers for details.

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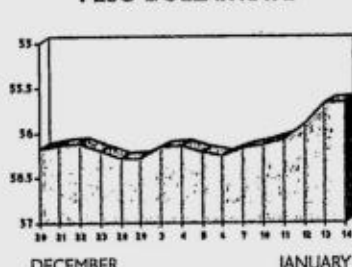
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Gov't eyes higher corporate income tax

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As of 5 p.m., Jan. 14, 2005

Y 102.98 = \$ 1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 14, 2004

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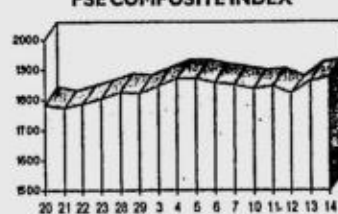
STOCK MARKET

Bullish run seen to continue

THE STOCK market is expected to continue its winning streak this week on government moves to tackle new tax measures and a favorable exchange rate.

"The outlook is positive for the market because of the ongoing discussions in Congress regarding additional revenue measures such as the modified value-added tax (system), which if passed, could raise P60 billion a year in additional revenues," Alfred Dy, head of research at European-based brokerage CLSA Phils., said.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

BULLISH/B4

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is considering a proposal in Congress to implement a two-tiered corporate income tax system wherein large corporations will have their tax liability raised to 40 percent.

According to Finance Undersecretary Grace Tan, it may be high time for the cash-starved government to reform the corporate income tax system so that it could raise more revenues. A two-tiered income tax system for corporations would also be consistent with the principle of equity taxation, she said.

"The more you earn the more taxes you should pay. A graduated system may be advisable because there are companies that earn oodles of money. On the other hand, companies that do not make much will be happier to pay (lower) taxes," she said in an interview.

Currently, all corporate taxpayers are imposed a uniform income tax rate of 32 percent. The DOF is looking at making the income tax system for corporate taxpayers similar to the one applied for individuals. Income taxes imposed on individual taxpayers vary depending on their income levels, with the highest at 32 percent.

Tan said the DOF was still computing the two possible income tax rates for corporate taxpayers, explaining that the ideal rates would be those that would not encourage tax delinquency. She said the government needed to raise more revenues, but that "we have to rein in the temptation to go very high because taxes can kill."

She said the DOF has started studying the impact of implementing a 40-percent rate for large companies, a level suggested by Sen. Ralph Recto.

The finance official said that achieving an equitable tax system would encourage more taxpayers to comply with their tax obligations. This will, in turn, address the high level of tax delinquency in the country.

Tan said what the government had to seriously address was the huge revenue losses every year that resulted from tax delinquency. She noted an earlier government study showing that 44 percent of the country's gross do-

mestic product came from the underground economy.

She said the DOF was hoping more companies would be encouraged to be legitimate taxpayers with the proposed corporate income tax system.

Prior to the implementation of the 1997 National Internal Revenue Code, corporate taxpayers were subjected to a graduated income tax system similar the one applied on individuals.

The Comprehensive Tax Reform Program of 1997, however, imposed a uniform 32-percent rate on all corporate taxpayers.

GMA-7 sets IPO within 1st quarter

By Clarissa S. Batino

GIVEN the stock market's bullishness, GMA Network Inc. is definitely selling as much as 30 percent of its shares to the public within the first quarter to raise about P9 billion for the company and its three major shareholders.

"Our target is to do the listing within the first quarter. But if we don't finish the entire process, then it would be within the second quarter. It will be a combination of local and international listing," GMA president Felipe Gozon said in an interview.

"There's no stopping us now except unforeseen political or economic events that could affect the market," he added.

Gozon said the company would raise its

authorized capital from the current P1 billion to accommodate the sale of primary shares, the proceeds of which would go to the company to finance its expansion and settle less than P500 million in outstanding debt.

Proceeds of a simultaneous secondary offering would go to the coffers of the shareholders, Gozon said.

The Gozon, Duavit and Jimenez families control GMA, now the most profitable broadcast company in the country.

Gozon said the owners would like to broaden the ownership base of the network giant to strengthen its accountability to the public.

GMA's public exercise would include GMA/B2



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BSP wins pay raise ruling

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has now been freed from a legal straightjacket inserted during Sen. Raul Roco's stewardship that prevented the bank of banks from raising salaries to levels more aligned with the private sector.

The Supreme Court, in an en banc ruling before Christmas but only made public last week, has struck down as unconstitutional a provision in the New Central Bank Act that pegged the rank-and-file salaries of the Bangko Sentral under the hidebound Salary Standardization Law.

The controversial proviso of Section 15(c), Article II of Republic Act No. 7653, passed in 1993, was meant to exempt officers of the new, rehabilitated central bank, those above salary grade 19, from the Salary Standardization Law, and thus attract and keep competent executives.

But with Congress subsequently passing the charters of eight government financial institutions that exempted every employee from the Salary Standardization Law, the continued operation of Section 15(c) now constitutes "invidious discrimination" on the estimated 3,000 rank-and-file employees of the Bangko Sentral, the Supreme Court said.

"In fine, the 'policy determination' argument may support the inequality of treatment between the rank and file and the officers of the BSP but it can not justify the inequality between the BSP rank and file and other GFIs who are similarly situated," said ponente Justice Reynato Puno.

The Central Bank Employees Association filed the constitutional suit against the BSP and the Executive Secretary, noting that the controversial provision only cropped up after a bicameral committee conference, as admitted by then Sen. Ernesto Maceda.

It was not clear who inserted the provision, but the chair of the Senate Committee on Banks and Financial Institutions and the bill's author was then Sen. Raul Roco.

Two justices, Antonio Carpio and Artemio Panganiban, dissented, saying their colleagues were treading on economic legislation, especially when there is already a pending bill in Congress precisely seeking the exemption of the Bangko Sentral from the Salary Standardization Law.

Bangko Sentral General Counsel Juan de Zuñiga Jr. said the SC ruling did not address the issue of retroactivity, and, hence, would not necessarily translate into any back-pay windfall for the rank-and-filers.

Ironically, because of the two-tiered salary scheme, the BSP's Monetary Board has been stymied from further increasing the by-now inadequate pay levels for its officers, for fear of creating too wide a salary gap with the rank-and-filers.

Del Monte slices

LUCIO Tan is working on a scheme that would exempt his takeover bid of fruits and condiments conglomerate Del Monte Pacific from making an across-the-board tender offer to the minority shareholders other than the Lorenzos.

According to the grapevine, the taipan has hired a Singapore law firm to ensure that what he would directly be acquiring are hold-

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

ing companies, not the publicly listed Del Monte shares in the Singapore bourse.

Tan is close to buying out the nearly 40-percent stake of Cirio, an ailing Italian food conglomerate, in Del Monte Pacific. Other than Cirio, the other significant shareholder of Del Monte Pacific is the family of Presidential Adviser for Jobs Generation Luis Lorenzo Jr., with a 21-percent stake.

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In addition to their shareholdings, the Lorenzos have preemptive rights over the 29 percent of Cirio's shareholdings in Del Monte Pacific.

This issue of preemptive rights, plus the tax exemption angle, has prompted a Tan son-in-law, Joseph Chua, to frequently shuttle between COCKTALES/B3

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Transco auction set in February

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER a number of hitches, the bidding for the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) concession agreement will finally push through next month, following the completion of the terms of reference for the auction.

A source familiar with the matter disclosed that the bidding for the concession contract was set for later next month, with the awarding to the winning bidder to follow in June.

"The schedule was approved by Malacañang during the last Cabinet meeting," the source said.

The source added that Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) president Raphael Lotilla informed Transco officials and employees of the new schedule during last week's flag raising ceremony.

Three entities had already signified their intention to bid for the 25-year concession contract, the source said.

During the negotiated bidding process that the government scrapped, four consortia expressed strong interest in operating and maintaining the country's TRANSCO/B4

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San Miguel to raise P18-20B from stock rights offering

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. is expected to raise roughly P18 to P20 billion from a stock rights offer to shareholders, terms of which are expected to be finalized

this month, industry analysts said.

Industry analysts also expect the balance of power in the country's largest food and beverage firm to change after the rights offer, but as to who will keep control remains in question.

This is because SMC chair and chief executive officer Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. has not yet disclosed if he will exercise his preemptive right, which gives him first crack at buying additional shares.

"It is a bit tricky, because San Miguel, unlike other conglomerates, has a lot of major shareholders. Government holds about 27 percent. Cojuangco is the one managing now, but what if he gets diluted? Government has spoken up that it will participate in the stock rights offer, while Danding, the second biggest shareholder, is silent," an analyst from a foreign brokerage said.

SMC earlier said it will issue additional shares equivalent to 10 percent of its outstanding capital stock.

As of September, SMC had 2.85 billion outstanding shares. Its board approved the issuance of additional shares coming from treasury shares.

Existing shareholders will have preemptive rights, or the right to subscribe to the additional issuance, at a ratio of one share for every 10 shares owned.

SMC expects to file the documents required for the proposed stock offering, and set the selling price, before the end of the month.

SMC appointed ABN Amro Rothschild as global coordinator, and Sycip Salazar as legal counsel for the offering.

Analysts said SMC will likely use the proceeds of the stock rights offer to finance its aggressive expansion here and overseas.

Sources close to the family of Henry Sy Sr., meanwhile, told the INQUIRER that there are no recent discussions to increase the group's stake in SMC.

It has also yet to be known whether the Sy group will participate in the rights offer.

The Sy Group views as favorable, however, the recent move by Japanese brewer Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd. to hike its stake in San Miguel to 19.67 percent.

The move reflected Kirin's vote of confidence in SMC, and its management's plan to pursue new markets in the Asia Pacific region.

Industry analysts see an agreement between Kirin and Cojuangco to vote together on major decisions.

With Kirin's recent purchase of additional shares, it is close to clinching one more board seat in SMC's 15-man board.

Kirin bought 117 million class B shares from the SMC Retirement Plan at P75 apiece, equivalent to P8.8 billion.

The block represents roughly 4.12 percent of San Miguel's outstanding 2.85 billion shares.

Before the transaction, Kirin held roughly 15.6 percent, equivalent to two board seats.

Aside from Kirin and Cojuangco, which own close to 20 percent of SMC, major members of the company's board are representatives of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, which hold roughly 25.5 percent, SM Investment Corp. of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr with 6.3 percent, and pension funds Government Service Insurance System, with 6.6 percent, and the Social Security System, with 5.3 percent.

Gov't bid to hike SMC stake bucked

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has turned down suggestions to increase the shares of the government in San Miguel Corp., saying the fiscally troubled administration should be allotting its meager resources to more pressing expenditure requirements.

"No, we don't have money to buy more shares. (Besides), we have no business running SMC, so our objective is to sell our existing shares at the right time," said Finance Undersecretary Eric Recto in a press briefing Friday.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) earlier suggested that the government purchase more shares in San Miguel to avoid having its stake being diluted.

PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac said her office intends to increase, and therefore protect, the government's share in San Miguel, but the DOF said no funds could be made available for such a move as of the moment.

The finance department also said that having the government's share diluted by a few numbers should not be a significant concern. Recto said having the government's shares reduced to 20 percent would not make any difference in its standing in the company.

"Even if we are diluted to say 21 or 20 shares, it will make no difference because 20 percent is already a big chunk," he said.

"Increasing the shares to 33 percent is what will make a difference because 33 percent is a number that allows one to make a veto. But it's never our intention to hold a 33-percent stake," Recto stressed.

The government, through the Coconut Industry Investment Fund controlled by the PCGG, currently has a 27-percent equity in San Miguel. It is also the biggest shareholder of the food and beverage company, holding five of the 15 board seats.

The PCGG's intention to acquire more San Miguel shares came after Japanese firm Kirin Brewery recently raised its stake in Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage company.

Transco ...

From page B3

nationwide power grid.

Of the four original bidders, three responded to the new letter-invitation, the source said.

A Department of Justice opinion issued Nov. 18, 2004 stated that the Transco concession could be auctioned off, even without a franchise, through a limited source bidding procedure.

Dy said another positive development was the spike in dollars sent home by overseas workers, surging by 27.7 percent in November to \$740 million from a year ago.

The January-to-November Overseas

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 13, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	4,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	25.5	27.5	25.5	27.5	1,702,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	52.5	53.5	52.5	53.5	2,771,600
China Banking Corp.	560	560	560	560	220
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	48	48	1,200
International Exch. Bank	16.25	16.75	16.25	16.75	920,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	25.5	26	140,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	11,800
Security Bank Corp.	28.5	28.5	27.5	28.5	51,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	24	23.75	24	36,700

FINANCIAL SERVICES	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Manulife Financial Corp.	2500	2500	2475	2475	370
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.38	348,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	110	110	110	110	50
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1795	1795	1795	1795	380

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	17.75	18	17.75	18	33,800
Diversified Fin. Network	3	3.95	3	3.95	14,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.88	1.92	1.88	1.9	19,399,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	930	930	930	930	74,180
People Inc.	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.9	140,700
ISM Communications Corp.	0.032	0.035	0.032	0.035	1,500,000
Liberty Telecom Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	80,000
Philippine Tel. Corp.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	16,910,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1335	1335	1335	1335	128,610
Varian Corp.	0.63	0.67	0.63	0.66	7,980,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	7,700,000

POWER & ENERGY	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Manila Electric Co. A	15.25	15.5	15.25	15.5	10,800
Manila Electric Co. B	24.25	24.5	24	24	870,700
Petron Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.4	11,884,000
Salcom Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	54,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.14	1,062,000

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Abolito Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	3,000
Infra Container Term Svc	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	952,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	200,000

CONSTRUCTION & OTHER PRODUCTS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
RELAPE	0.36	0.39	0.36	0.39	260,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	2.6	2.95	2.6	2.95	15,438,000
Holcom Philippines Inc.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	240,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	240,000

FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	111,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	25,800
San Miguel Corp. A	79	79	79	79	12,600
San Miguel Corp. B	79	79	79	79	38,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	250,000

HOLDING FIRMS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0055	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	90,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	8,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	8,178,000
Abolito Equity Ventures	3.25	3.35	3.25	3.3	1,471,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	3,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.68	102,000
APC Group, Inc.	0.085	0.09	0.085	0.09	2,200,000
Alcon Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	15,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	30,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
Bachofan Cons Indus Inc.	20.5	23.25	20.5	23	426,400
Bachofan Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.7	0.68	0.7	23,780,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.17	240,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	1,380,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.185	4,870,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	20,588,000
El Comodoro Resources	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	4,000,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	8,170,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	6.1	6.6	6.1	6.6	2,993,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30.5	31	30.5	31	1,020,800
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	3,000,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	3,050,000
J. G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.32	2.32	2.3	2.3	355,000
MacroAsia Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,885,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.38	0.41	0.38	0.4	97,760,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	200,000
Solid Group, Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	50,000
Tandayud Holdings Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.9	33,000
Unwired Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	40,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	400,000

MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Active Alliance, Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.37	0.37	0.34	0.34	150,000

HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Belle Corp.	0.56	0.63	0.56	0.63	111,370,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.97	1	0.96	0.98	4,140,000
Luxure & Resorts Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	200,000
Premiere Int. Prod. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	300,000
Philippine Racing Club	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	40,000

BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
ABS-CBN Hldgs Corp. (Pdr)	18	18	18	18	37,200
MacroAsia Corp. Warrants	0.0625	0.0625	0.0575	0.0575	300,000

PROPERTY	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Ayala Land Inc.	7.4	7.7	7.4	7.7	14,576,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	20,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	60,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.29	23,790,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	0.20
Empire East Land Inc.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.35	17,580,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	9,002,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	2,000,000
Fi-Estate Land Inc.	0.62	0.63	0.62	0.63	1,050,000
MIC Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	12,570,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	700,000
Primex Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	70,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	30,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	400,000
SM Development Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	275,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	8.1	7.9	8	12,743,000

MINING	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.42	0.46	0.42	0.46	80,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	100,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	56,100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	4.15	4.1	4.1	4.1	288,400,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	5,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	15,490,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.43	0.46	0.43	0.46	13,960,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.019	266,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.025	0.024	0.025	0.025	288,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.005	0.0055	0.005	0.005	223,000,000
Phlox Mining Corp. A	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83	4,130,000
Phlox Mining Corp. B	0.84	0.86	0.84	0.85	9,560,000

CURRENCIES	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.753807	1.000000	55.9900
Japan	Yen	0.007362	0.009766	0.5468
United Kingdom	Pound	1.425825	1.891500	105.9051
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096725	0.128315	7.1844
Switzerland	Franc	0.645825	0.856751	47.9695
Canada	Dollar	0.627858	0.832917	46.6350
Singapore	Dollar	0.461101	0.611696	34.2489
Australia	Dollar	0.578805	0.767578	42.9767
Bahrain	Dinar	1.999540	2.652590	148.5185
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201015	0.266667	14.9307
Brunei	Dollar	0.458694	0.608830	34.1444
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000109	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.019413	0.025753	1.4419
UAE	Dirham	0.205268	0.272309	15.2466
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.326600	74.2763
Argentina	Peso	0.255745	0.339271	18.9958
Brazil	Real	0.279708	0.371058	20.7755
Denmark	Kroner	0.134445	0.178355	9.9861
India	Rupae	0.017317	0.022973	1.2863
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.198397	0.263193	14.7382
Mexico	New Peso	0.067524	0.089578	5.0155
New Zealand	Dollar	0.532877	0.706914	39.5

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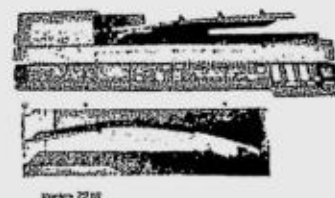
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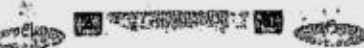
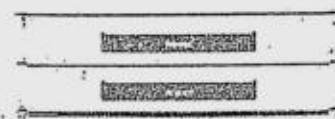
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Gov't to increase inflation targets for '05, '06

By Doris C. Dumlaio

THE GOVERNMENT will jack up its inflation target for this year and 2006 to factor in the changing spending habits of Filipinos as reflected in an updated consumer price index.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the inflation target range might have to be increased to 4.5-5.5 percent, using the 2000 CPI base year, from the original target of 4-5 percent for the next two years.

"Consumer spending habits have changed from the time that people were buying more food than cell phones. Now, people are buying more cell phones than food," Buenaventura said in a press briefing Friday.

Food inflation accounted for 51 percent of the 1994-based CPI basket.

CPI is a measure of change in the average retail prices of goods and services commonly purchased by a particular group of people in a particular area. The inflation rate, in turn, is the annual rate of change in CPI.

The country's CPI basket includes these commodity groups: food, beverage and tobacco; housing and repairs; fuel, light and water; services; clothing, and, miscellaneous items.

Buenaventura said the changes in the inflation target were still being finalized.

Earlier, the BSP said the 4-5 percent inflation target would still apply in 2005 using the 2000-

based CPI and a 3-4 percent range for 2006.

As the National Statistics Office will cease to publish the 1994-base year data this year, the BSP said it should start using the 2000-based CPI data in its monetary assessment and inflation forecasting.

The country's inflation rate averaged at 5.5 percent in 2004 using the 1994 base. Based on the BSP's estimates, about 4 percentage points out of the 5.5 percent rate were due to the rise in prices of food and energy items.

The year 2004 saw rising prices of prime commodities and services. The rising prices of food items such as fish and corn were the result of supply constraints, while higher meat prices were a result of consumers buying fewer poultry products due to the avian flu scare.

At the same time, global demand and supply factors resulted in the rising oil prices to record highs since the first Gulf War, that in turn led to increases in domestic pump prices, power rates and transport fares.

This year, the BSP has conceded that the target would be breached. But it does not regret keeping its interest rates steady in 2004 despite the rise in inflation beyond the government's target range of 4-5 percent.

In a letter to Malacañang, Buenaventura said an increase in its key policy rates would have had a limited impact in containing price pressures since these emanated mainly from supply factors.

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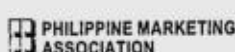
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On meddlesome priests and gullible nuns

SOME priests and nuns follow the communist line that the mining law should be scrapped. Not just amended, but scrapped.

Fr. John Carroll S.J., warned of "more tragedies in the making." Bishop Medroso of Borongan, Samar, called mining "anti-life." A pair of RGS nuns, Sr. Elenita Belardo and Sr. Genny Dumay said the ruling would lead to genocide. Fr. Allan Arcebuthe held President Macapagal-Arroyo "directly responsible for the grave violation of our national sovereignty and patrimony." Not to be outdone, the running priest also raised his voice.

May the saints protect and preserve us from meddlesome priests and gullible nuns.

They say or hint that not all that the Supreme Court rules as legal is moral. Right. So, let us discuss the moral issues of mining.

In His infinite wisdom, God blessed the Philippines with enormous mineral resources. After centuries of mining, the wealth still under our feet is worth as much as one trillion American dollars. He created this mineral wealth for the good of the entire Filipino people, if not the world.

But God draws straight with crooked lines. His generous gifts are not for easy digging. Take gold, the most precious metal. For every metric ton (1,000 kilos) of commercial grade ore, there is one solitary gram of gold. Putting it another way, commercial grade ore contains one part gold and one million parts ore.

To compound the paradox, God did not bury ore in Loyola Heights. He buried it deep underground in far-away mountain ranges. Searching for ore is the arduous task of geologists like Rudy Obial.

To compound the paradox even further, God sometimes combined copper with gold. This makes the ore more profitable to process; two metals are extracted from the same ore. But separating the two metals makes the process more difficult.

Why all these paradoxes? I suggest to these meddlesome priests and gullible nuns that God wants us to earn and appreciate the value of His gifts. Then, we will put His precious gifts to good use and not waste them away.

I suggest to the meddlesome priests and gullible nuns that God does not want His gifts to remain underground. Otherwise, He would not have created them in the first place. He wants us to search for them, dig them out, process them, and convert them into cash.

So, the issue boils down to this: how do we dig these God-given gifts out of the ground? Large-scale miners, digging tunnels several kilometers long and using the latest technology, recover as much as 98 percent of the gold in the ore. Small-scale miners, with little resources and using antiquated technology, re-

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General



cover only about 40 percent. So, who is doing a better job at God's work?

Of course, the rights of indigenous peoples should be respected. This is why the law requires that they should give their consent to large-scale mining. If they do, they will get money beyond their wildest dreams. By the way, the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences says there has never been a case of indigenous people having been driven out against their will by large-scale miners.

Of course, the environment has to be protected. The Mines View Park has been a tourist attraction in Baguio for decades. From the park, the tourist has a panoramic view of several underground mines. Has anyone seen the pine forests devastated by mining?

An open pit mine leaves an ugly scar. But, when the ore runs out, the law requires the damage be repaired. Mining engineers will see to that.

The most celebrated accident was at the copper mine in Marinduque. Boac River was polluted, it is true, but no life was lost, and nobody got sick.

A foreign contractor in a Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement is not allowed to run away with huge profits. The FTAA is a profit sharing scheme. With the foreigner sinking all the money and taking all the risks, the Filipino people, through the national government, gets the lion's share of the after-tax profits. What more do we want?

Of course, safety to life and property is of prime importance. Safety programs are major and essential components in the operational procedures of a mine. But, mining being inherently dangerous, accidents can only be minimized but never entirely prevented. Nonetheless, more Filipinos die in traffic accidents every year than in mining accidents.

So, when these meddlesome priests and gullible nuns protest against large-scale mining, aren't they trying to thwart God's eternal plan for the Philippines?

If I were the father confessor of these meddlesome priests and gullible nuns, I will tell them to do penance by reading the mining act, the implementing rules, and the Supreme Court decision.

I will make them promise that when they want to look into issues beyond the Bible and the Catechism, they shall do so with a great deal of discernment and circumspection. Then, and only then, will I grant them absolution.

PVB takes over Bankwise

PHILIPPINE Veterans Bank, a private commercial bank owned by Filipino World War II veterans and their heirs, has quietly taken over cash-strapped Bankwise from a consortium led by President Macapagal-Arroyo's former publicist, Dante Ang.

Well-placed banking sources disclosed to the INQUIRER that PVB had assumed control of the capital-deficient thrift bank last Jan. 12 and installed its own nominees to its board.

"It's a 100-percent takeover," the source said.

Ang, the publisher of The Manila Times, was replaced as Bankwise chair by PVB chair Emmanuel de Ocampo.

In a separate interview, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura welcomed PVB's takeover of Bankwise and the

expected merger.

"It really needs capital infusion. This should resolve its capital needs because it will be absorbed by Veterans Bank," the BSP chief said.

Bankwise still has some unpaid cash advances from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Another banking source said Bankwise was working on as much as a P2 billion in financial assistance from PVB. Others said PVB already had some existing credit exposure in the thrift bank.

A source from PVB said the commercial bank was due to announce its takeover of Bankwise in the next few days. The thrift bank has six branches and an asset base of about P1.5 billion.

Prior to the takeover, Bankwise was 10 percent owned by Ang and 60 percent by publicly listed Wise Holdings Inc., controlled by Filipino group VR Holdings Corp. **Doris C. Dumlaio**

Cocktales

tween Manila and Singapore these days, according to the grapevine.

Heard through the grapevine

RUSTANS plans to sublease the space vacated by its department store and its pioneering "superstore" in Cubao's Araneta Center, most

likely to a call center.

The block-long structure is owned by Rustans, while the lot is being leased from the Aranetas, which decided to extend the lease for an undetermined number of years.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pltdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

From page B3

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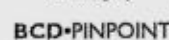
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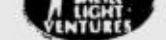
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EPCIB raising \$150M via tier 2 offering

By Doris C. Dumlaog

EQUITABLE PCI Bank, the country's third biggest bank, plans to raise about \$150 million in fresh capital through subordinated debt or tier 2 offering, INQUIRER sources said.

The sources said the bank had mandated foreign banks HSBC Ltd. and JP Morgan Chase to underwrite the tier 2 offering.

Another source said the offering was supposed to have been firmed up during the Christmas holidays but was preempted by the expected credit rating downgrade by London-based Fitch Ratings.

Analysts said it was uncertain how the Fitch Ratings would affect the timing of the offering but a banker said it would be launched "soon."

It would be Equitable PCI's second time to tap the foreign market for supplemental capital. In 2003, it was the first bank to take advantage of the new rules drawn up by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on the issuance of subordinated debt eligible as tier 2 capital and after the sovereign ratings downgrade on the Philippines.

The bank earlier raised \$200 million worth of subordinated notes due in 2013 and redeemable with step-up rates in 2008. UBS then acted as lead manager and sole bookrunner.

The bank, controlled by the Go family, was the target of a takeover attempt by mall magnate Henry Sy, who owns Banco de Oro Universal Bank. It is also wrestling with the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines for the number three slot among the country's biggest banks.

Under the new risk-based capital adequacy framework adopted by the BSP, the qualifying capital covers tier 1 or core capital and tier 2 or supplementary capital less deductions.

Deductions include equity investments in subsidiaries and reciprocal investments in other enterprises, which reflect the multiple use of capital. Risk-weighted assets include both on- and off-balance sheet exposures weighted according to their relative risk. The risk weights are applied to the book value of balance sheet assets and the credit equivalent amount of off-balance sheet exposures.

The delineation between core and supplementary capital is based on the capital elements' ability to absorb losses.

The BSP's tier 2 guidelines contained the recommendations of the Bank for International Settlements' Basel Committee, the international standard-setting body for banks.

While banks across the region are cleaning up the bad assets that piled up since the 1997 Asian currency turmoil, regulators are fine-tuning their regulatory and supervisory practices in line with BIS standards.

In the Philippines, tougher risk management guidelines have compelled banks to issue tier-2 instruments and consider other long-term debt instruments, including long-term negotiable certificates of deposits and senior notes.

January 10, 2005

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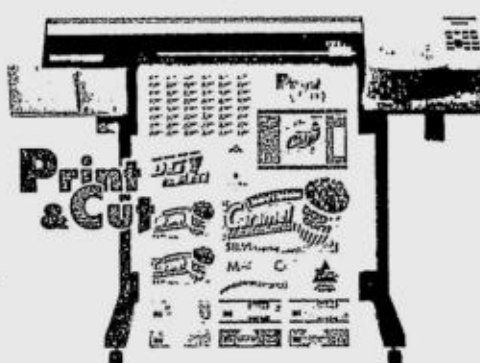
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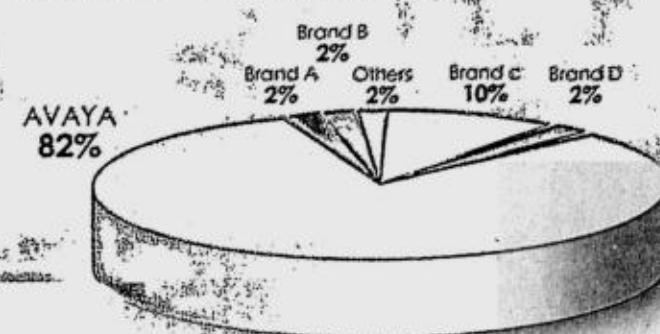
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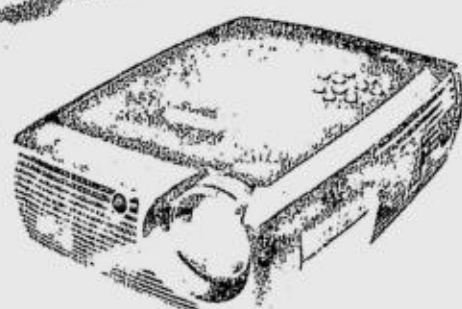
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Touch Mobile to cut network call rates

TOUCH Mobile, the other wireless brand of Globe Telecom Inc., is cutting call rates within the network to as low as P1 per minute starting the third minute of call.

For the first two minutes, Touch Mobile calls within the network would still be charged P5.50 per minute. Calls to and from other networks would remain at P6.50 for every minute.

An official said among the mobile phone brands, only Touch Mobile had not adjusted its rates. Globe hopes the new fee scheme would attract new Touch Mobile subscribers and keep existing ones in the network.

A sluggish performance of Touch Mobile has prompted Globe to re-assess its position in the market. There were plans to relaunch the brand early this year.

Globe's subsidiary, Innove Communications Inc., positioned Touch Mobile to pierce the lower segment of the wireless market.

But the brand had not delivered substantial results, ending the third quarter of 2004 with only 1.6 million subscribers, or up only 350,000 against 1.25 million the previous year.

In contrast, Talk N' Text of Pilipino Telephone Corp. counted 4.2 million subscribers as of end-September.

Gerardo Ablaza, Globe president, said the company wanted to strengthen the Touch Mobile brand so it could play a bigger role in the company's bid to penetrate the mass market.

The average monthly churn rate or the percentage of Touch Mobile subscribers who had disconnected stood at 13.4 percent from January to September this year, up by 6.9 percent against the same period last year.

The high percentage of Touch Mobile churn was due to the delayed launch of the over-the-air reloading service, as well as the SIM swap offered by the competitor, Globe said.

Average revenue per unit or Arpu for Touch Mobile for the first nine months of 2004 stood at P181, down from P223 a year ago although acquisition cost per subscriber also dropped 15 percent at P158 from P186 in 2003.

Clarissa S. Batino

NTC grants 30-day reprieve to Innove, other carriers with NDD promos

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission will look into all telecom wireless and fixed-line pricing schemes following the unresolved issue on whether major players have engaged in predatory landline pricing at the expense of smaller operators.

The regulator's review could lead to the scrapping of programs offering unlimited calls and even text for a fixed fee.

For the meantime, the NTC gave Globe Telecom Inc. and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. as much as 30 days to offer their special national long distance rates while the regulator was evaluating the issue.

"The commission will study, review, evaluate and render a resolution of all price or rate reduction schemes," according to the NTC in an order signed on Jan. 14.

The recent NTC decision temporarily lifted a cease-and-desist order slapped on the two telecom giants on Jan. 4 following complaints from smaller landline players that the promos constitute predatory pricing.

In its Jan. 14 order, the NTC directed Globe's wholly-owned Innove Communications Inc. to offer its toll-free NDD services for a period not exceeding 30 days upon the receipt of the memo.

The commission also allowed PLDT to continue with its Plan 200 until Jan. 31.

Ronald Solis, NTC chair, said that while the commission supports the lowering of telecom rates to benefit the public, it must also guard against ruinous competition that would prevent smaller players from operating.

Innove's "one country, one rate" nationwide program allows Globeline subscribers unlimited call time within the network for P650 a month. PLDT Plan 200 enables its customers to call any PLDT subscriber for only P200 each month on top of the monthly service fee.

Globe senior vice president Rodolfo Salalima denied that the company's landline subsidiary, Innove Communications, had engaged in predatory pricing.

The Globe official told the NTC that for an activity to be called "predatory," it must be priced below cost of production, temporary, and done with the intention to drive out competition.

Only a dominant player may be accused of predatory pricing, and Innove, Salalima said, does not qualify itself as such.

Globe's Innove also challenged the NTC to go after other carriers offering a similar deal like Sun Cellular's 24/7, PLDT and Smart Communication Inc.'s "Telebabad Day," Smart's Virtual Network Service, PLDT's "Nakakalokang Sale" and Bayan Telecommunication Inc.'s unlimited promo in Tacloban City.

Gokongwei's Sun Cellular said its 24/7

was a plan and not a promo. This package allows subscribers to text and call without limit for as low as P250 a month or P100 for P10 days.

"Our promo is not offered below cost as Innove's NDD service for the month is already covered and paid for by the subscribers' monthly fee," said Globe's Salalima. "The promo is sustainable and the plan will be a permanent offering to its Globeline subscribers."

He added it was not designed to impede or prevent competition.

"In the remote possibility that Innove's 'one country, one rate' be adjudged as predatory and discriminatory and therefore should be stopped, then the marketing activities and all similar and identical promos of the other carriers should also be enjoined permanently," Salalima told the NTC.

The NTC said it was mandated "to ensure that the telecom industry remains viable, efficient, reliable and universal in accordance with the fundamental objectives of the government."

The NTC's Jan. 14 order also directed smaller players like the Private Telephone Companies of the Philippines, or Paptelco, and PT&T to submit a position paper on Globe and PLDT's NDD programs.

Other players cited by Globe as offering similar deals, such as Sun Cellular, Smart and Bayantel, were also asked to submit their stand on the issue.



A MAN halfway up a ladder placed on a highway in Sta. Fe, turned the country into a sing replacement for the landlines

With 5 sealed deals, Napocor sees extra P30M

By Abigail L. Ho

THE STATE-RUN National Power Corp. expects to rake in an additional P30 million a month in revenue with the recent signing of power supply contracts with five big customers.

Data from the power firm's sales and services group show that with estimated energy sales of around eight million

kilowatt-hours a month to San Miguel Corp. subsidiary Beverage Packing Specialists Inc., the Bataan Economic Zone, Specialty Pulp Manufacturing Inc., EC-SCO Inc. and Dynasty Management Development Corp., revenue may go up by an average of P30 million a month.

The Bataan Ecozone already started drawing power from Napocor in August last year, while the San Miguel unit's

contract took effect Oct. 25.

This year, the state firm aims to provide power to at least seven industrial customers: INGASCO Inc. in San Jose, Batangas; the Philippine National Oil Co. Energy Development Corp. facility within the Bacon-Manito Power Plant Complex in Sorsogon; Grand Steel Inc. in Cebu City; Elegant Steelworks International Inc. in Villanueva, Misamis

Oriental; Manila Southcoast Development Corp. in Nasugbu, Batangas; Purity Ice Plant and Cold Storage in Labo, Camarines Sur; and the Iloilo Provincial Government Complex in Iloilo City.

Napocor had 112 industrial customers as of end-2003.

These customers include bulk-power users Global Steelworks International Inc. (formerly National Steel Corp.),

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uses to return a message on his cellular phone in this undated file photo Nueva Vizcaya. Big telecom players like Smart and Globe have virtually the calling-rate area. The technological leaps made by cellular phones as mobile are now threatening small telephone operators in the provinces. BEN MOSES EBREO

n monthly revenue

in Cement Corp., Philippine Associ-
 Smelting and Refining Corp., Re-
 Cement Corp., Philippine Phos-
 Fertilizer Corp., Alsons Cement
 , Northern Cement Corp. and
 pine Sinter Corp.
 pocor derives its energy sales rev-
 from independent power produc-
 private distribution utilities, elec-
 cooperatives and directly connect-

ed customers.

The state firm's single biggest cus-
 tomer remains the Lopez-led power dis-
 tributor Manila Electric Co., which sup-
 plies electricity to 23 cities and 88 mu-
 nicipalities in Metro Manila, Bulacan,
 Rizal, Cavite, and parts of Laguna, Que-
 zon and Batangas.

Meralco also supplies power to 17
 barangays in Pampanga.

DOF tries last ditch effort to get Congress to pass VAT rate hike

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is desperately trying to convince a reluctant Congress to approve the twin proposal of raising the value-added tax rate to 12 percent, and imposing VAT on currently exempted sectors.

According to the DOF, failure to persuade Congress to agree with the VAT plan—expected to be the biggest revenue provider among the Arroyo administration's tax proposals—may force the fiscally troubled government to resort to more borrowings.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amaton said the VAT hike alone would be enough to save the country from a credit rating downgrade.

DOF estimates said the VAT plan would yield about P60 billion in additional revenue a year, or a bulk of the P80 billion that the government would need annually over the medium term to wipe out its yawning budget deficit. Raising the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent alone is expected to raise P34 billion a year.

The country's finance chief said the Philip-
 pines could prevent a credit-rating down-
 grade by ratings firm Moody's Investors Ser-
 vice if Congress would pass the VAT plan with-
 in the month. Moody's is set to issue a deci-
 sion over the fate of the Philippines' credit
 standing in early February.

But the chances of Congress agreeing to the
 VAT plan remain dim, as senators have criti-
 cized the plan as too burdensome for the
 poor.

Legislators from the upper chamber said
 raising the VAT and subjecting more products
 and services to the tax would hit the already
 constricted purchasing power of middle- and
 low-income earning families.

The Lower House, for its part, opted to re-
 tain the VAT exemption of cooperatives,
 which was included in the list of sectors the
 DOF wants to impose the VAT on. The lifting
 of the VAT exemption would have yielded P9
 billion a year for the government.

Defending the VAT plan, Finance Undersec-
 retary Grace Tan said that the tax, contrary to



AMATONG

popular belief, would affect the rich more
 than the poor.

VAT is a tax on consumption, and therefore
 it will hit people who purchase more, she
 said.

Tan added that poor families would be
 barely affected by a VAT hike because the ba-
 sic items they consume would be spared.

"Agriculture products are exempted from
 VAT, so fish, chicken and vegetables will not
 be covered," she said.

In terms of their electricity consumption,
 poor families enjoy lifeline rates, because
 they are partly subsidized by large electricity
 consumers, Tan added.

The finance official added that the proposed
 increase in VAT would only constitute 3 per-
 cent of the disposable income of poor families.

Tan said that if the VAT plan would not be
 legislated, the government would have to
 content itself with the other revenue-raising
 proposals, such as a simplified net income tax
 system.

"But they do not have the same revenue im-
 pact of the VAT," Tan said.

DTI roadshow on mining gets to China

WITH THE recent Supreme Court decision up-
 holding the constitutionality of the Philippine
 Mining Act of 1995, the Department of Trade
 and Industry will be embarking on a mining
 roadshow in China next month to promote co-
 operation in the fields of mineral exploration
 and development between the two countries.

Following the top-level Mining Roadshow
 in Beijing on Jan. 17-19, an International
 Mining Conference will be held in Manila on
 Feb. 2-4.

Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima said in a
 statement over the weekend that the local
 mining sector was expected to go through a
 huge revival, adding that the sector could be-
 come a major factor in the country's economic
 development.

"In the next six years, we can expect to at-
 tract \$6.5 billion in investments, export some
 \$3.1 billion worth of minerals annually and
 generate \$490 million in tax revenues," he
 said. "These projects will employ 34,800
 workers and create 208,600 indirect jobs."

Trade Undersecretary and Board of Invest-
 ments managing head Elmer Hernandez said
 the China roadshow would give local mining
 industry stakeholders a good opportunity to
 discuss with their Chinese counterparts the
 possibility of going into joint ventures and co-
 operation agreements.

During the roadshow, he said 23 large- and
 medium-scale mining projects, including ex-
 isting projects for expansion and new projects
 on the drawing board, would be presented to
 Chinese government officials and mining in-
 dustry executives.

Abigail L. Ho

Financial and global muscle

When you are ready to invest, it pays to approach a person knowledgeable in the how-
 to's of mutual funds. Although you have been saving your money for a good part of your
 life, investing is something you need help with because you may be parting with a larger
 amount of money this time to obtain a higher yield. With it comes a natural reaction of being
 a bit apprehensive about the safety of your money.

This is where the track record of an asset management company who will handle your
 money will come to play. It is wise to compare the standings of different companies but be
 sure to look at its assets, global influence and financial status.

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 in assets, PAMI is the country's leading asset management firm. It is wholly owned by
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 American International Group (AIG), a world leader in the field of diversified finance.

AIG is the leading US-based international insurance and financial services organization
 and the largest underwriter of commercial and industrial insurance in the US. In 2003, it
 registered \$678.3 billion in assets and \$ 9.3 billion in income.

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Some of you may want the idea of
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It is said that there are two kinds of
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 to grow your money.

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 earn more when it comes to investment
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† Isaiah 41 Verse 10

Fear not for I am with you, do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand...

MA. ROSA CASTAÑER

Vda. DE ROCHA

November 8, 1930 – January 15, 2005

Her bereaved family: brothers Candido G. Castañer (†), Antonio G. Castañer (†), sisters and their families Ma. Beatriz C. Geisler, Ma. Elisa C. Molina, Maria Cristina C. Ponce Enrile & Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, Carmen O. Castañer; sons and daughter Alfredo C. Rocha, Jr. and Pet Rocha, Pilar C. Rocha, Miguel C. Rocha and Thelma Rocha; grandchildren Michelle, Barbara Anne, R.J. Iñaki, Janessa, Jammy, Karla, Jeremy, Michael; nephews & nieces Cong. Juan C. Ponce Enrile, Jr. and Sally Ponce Enrile, Katrina Ponce Enrile Kocher and James Kocher; grand nieces and nephews Kriska Ponce Enrile Bernasconi, Kara Ponce Enrile, Karina Ponce Enrile, JR Ponce Enrile, Sara Simone Ponce Enrile, Kristen Ponce Enrile, Cristiana Ponce Enrile Kocher, Sam Ponce Enrile and Matteo Ponce Enrile Bernasconi and relatives entrust her to God our Father and enjoin all her friends to pray for her.

Her remains lie in state at St. Therese Lisieux, Magallanes Memorial Chapel, Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, January 19, 2005 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 2:30 p.m. Mass.

Our Dearly Beloved

COL. JUANA C. RAÑADA

Ref. – PC; Decorated World War II Veteran
 St. Lukes School of Nursing Alumnus – 1930

Now peacefully rests in the infinite grace & goodness of the Lord
 on the 10th day of January 2005 at the age of 96.



She is survived by her sister, Ignacia R. Cajigal; brother, Dr. Marcelino C. Rañada; daughter, Dr. Araceli R. Dantes and husband Dr. Pablito Dantes; nephews, nieces and grandchildren.

We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Q.C. from Jan. 17 – 20, and at the AFP Medical Center Chapel, V. Luna Q.C. on Jan. 21, 2005. Necrological services will be held after the 5 p.m. Mass on Friday, Jan. 21, 2005.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 22, 2005 at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati following the 8 a.m. Mass.

In Loving Memory

on the Twenty Sixth (26th) Death Anniversary of
EUFRASIA COSTA DE VITUG
 who died January 17, 1979

and on the Forty Seventh (47th) Death Anniversary of
VICTOR BELTRAN VITUG
 who died February 1, 1958

Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of their souls.

"...absent
 from the
 body to be
 present with
 the Lord."
 — 2 Corinthians 5:8

KATRINA ROQUE DOMINGUEZ

*Peacefully joined her Creator
 on January 15, 2005 at the age of 21*

Her bereaved mother Wilda V. Roque;
 grandmother Gloria V. Roque; uncles (†) Perry Roque and
 Fernando Ceranio; auntie Grace F. Roque; cousins Patrick,
 Gabriel and Nikka; relatives and friends request the pious reader
 to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Mount Carmel Parish Church,
 New Manila Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, January 18, 2005 at La Loma Cemetery,
 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Death Notices

MERCEDES G. REYES

*Peacefully passed away
 on January 12, 2005 at the age of 70.*

Her remains lie in state at the family residence
 in Centro, Cabatuan, Isabela.

Interment will be on January 19, 2005
 at 9:00 a.m. in Cabatuan Cemetery

— o o —

JOHN XAVIER LOPEZ YU

May 19, 1985 – January 14, 2005

His remains lie in state at Holy Trinity Chapel,
 Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, January 19,
 2005 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Loyola
 Memorial Park, Marikina City.

— o o —

SANTIAGO "Tiaging"
ALUMINIS, JR.

*Peacefully joined our Lord on
 January 14, 2005 at the age of 70.*

His remains lie in state at Loyola Chapels,
 Guadalupe and interment will be tomorrow,
 January 18, 2005 at Loyola Memorial Park,
 Marikina, after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

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 2020 Brgy. Dita, Sta. Rosa, Laguna; Tels. (049) 837-8852; 831-4142; Fax (049) 631-4888
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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
 (Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently with Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for pre-qualification and if later found qualified, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title: Proposed Construction of the Perimeter Fence of the BSP Acquired Property at Brgy. Lumit, Slang, Cavite
Scope of Work: Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the completion of the proposed construction of the perimeter fence of the BSP acquired property in accordance with the approved plans & specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location: Brgy. Lumit, Slang, Cavite
Approved Budget: Pesos Seven Million One Hundred Twenty Six Thousand Pesos Only (P7,126,000.00)
Contract Duration: One Hundred Calendar Days (100 cd)
Source of Funding: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirement (Criteria): PCAB License
Contractors Construction Experience: IAC category of at least Small "S" (Building and Industrial Plant) Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2000 to present) at least two (2) projects involving construction of perimeter security fences preferably using prefabricated components or other similar in nature and complexity one of which costs not less than Three Million Five Hundred Thousand pesos.
Certification of Satisfactory Performance: Should be able to submit a certification of Satisfactory Performance from the client for at least two (2) of the declared completed similar project costing not less than 3 M pesos.
At least Seven Million One Hundred Twenty Six Thousand Pesos Only (P7,126,000.00)

Net Financial Contracting Capacity computed: as 10x (Current Asset less Current Liabilities) minus (Value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started) Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate in the amount of not less than Seven Hundred Twelve Thousand Six Hundred Pesos (P712,600.00)
Eligibility Statement Forms: Cost of Forms: Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set) Jan. 18 to 26, 2005
Deadline of Submission: January 26, 2005 / 4:30 p.m.
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility: February 11, 2005
Date of Issuance: Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents.
Bid / Tender Documents: Five Thousand Pesos per set (P5,000/set) Feb. 14 to 15, 2005
Cost of Documents: February 16, 2005 / 10:00 AM
Date of Issuance: MR2A, Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts.
Pre-Bid Conference: March 9, 2005 / 11:00 AM
Date and Time: March 9, 2005 / 11:00 AM
Venue: For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat-telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor-Five Storey Building, BSP Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts., Manila, 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm.
Schedule for issuance of notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.
Guidelines stipulated in the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 & its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall apply relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor whose bids is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) MELPIN A. GONZAGA
 Vice-Chairman

(PDI-Jan. 17 and 24, 2005)


NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Region IX – Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City
 Tel. Nos. (062) 9911828, (062) 9911789, Fax No. (062) 9911399

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority (NFA) in Region IX, with official address at Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City is inviting all interested shipping companies/ship owners/operators who are registered/licensed with MARINA to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hiring of vessels for voyages charter in the dispersal of NFA stocks from Port of Zamboanga City to the provinces of Region IX and the ARMM provinces of Basilan, Sulu & Tawi-Tawi, as follows:

Destination (Port/Province)	Max. Quantity (In bags of 50 kg)	Freight Rate per Bag of 50 kg (P)	Approved Budget (P)
Jolo Port, Sulu	15,000	16.00	240,000.00
Bongao Port, Tawi-Tawi	40,000	20.00	800,000.00
Pagadian Port, Zambo del Sur	200,000	17.00	3,400,000.00
Palaud Wharf, Ipi, Zambo, Sibugay	90,000	15.00	1,350,000.00
Malangas Wharf, Zambo, Sibugay	20,000	16.00	320,000.00
Lampao Wharf, Lilo, ZON	50,000	17.00	850,000.00
Pulawan Wharf, Capitan City	120,000	18.00	2,160,000.00
Isabela Port, Basilan	145,000	10.00	1,450,000.00
Siocan Port, ZON	30,000	8.00	240,000.00

Schedule of bidding activities:

Particulars	Date/Time
• Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & Issuance of bid forms	January 28 & 31, 2005 / 6 am-4 pm
• Pre-Bid Conference	February 4, 2005 / 9:00 am
• Submission and opening of bids	February 18, 2005 / 2:00 pm

All shipping operators interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of Letter of Intent to participate and payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 to NFA-BAC, Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated above.

Interested bidders who are not NFA Accredited Shipping Operators and/or whose Registration had already expired may still participate provided they shall apply for accreditation/renewal at NFA, Region IX not later than January 25, 2005.

The venue of Pre-Bid Conference and Bidding Proper will be at NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City.

All particulars relative to Bid Security, Performance Security, bidding procedures and evaluation up to awarding shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its IRR-A, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and as provided in the Instruction to Bidders.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA
 OIC-Office of ARD, and
 Chairman, RBAC

(PDI-Jan. 12 & 17, 2005)



Republic of the Philippines
 Department of Agriculture
AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE
 ATI Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila 1100
 Tel. No. (63-2) 928-7397 Fax No. (63-2) 920-9792 E-mail: atida@i-next.net

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Agricultural Training Institute of the Department of Agriculture (DA-ATI) invites all qualified contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the construction of pig buildings and pens for a 60-sow level farm and 10-boar Artificial Insemination Center, consisting of:

- one (1) building for dry and pregnant sows,
- one (1) building for farrowing sows,
- four (4) buildings for farrowers,
- one (1) nursery building for weaners and
- (one) 1 building for 10 AI boars

within a prescribed period of 180 days upon receipt of the Notice To Proceed.

The project site is at the Agricultural Training Institute – International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ATI-ITCPH), located at Brgy. Maraway, Lipa City.

Funds for the construction of the building will be sourced out from the Agricultural Competitive Enhancement Fund - approved Project entitled, "Establishment and Operation of a 60-Sow Level Pig Farm and 10-Boar Artificial Insemination Center."

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is **P 4,746,625.35**.

For this particular bid, participating contractors must have a minimum Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) Medium A classification for buildings and should be experienced in the construction of piggy projects.

The schedule of activities is as follows:

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME
1. Submission of Letter of Intent	Jan. 24-26, 2005	8:00am to 5:00pm
2. Issuance of eligibility requirements	Jan. 24-31, 2005	8:00am to 5:00pm
3. Submission of eligibility requirements and issuance of bid documents	Feb. 7, 2005	8:00am to 5:00pm
4. Pre-Bid Conference	Feb. 11, 2005	1:00pm
5. Submission of bid proposal/Opening of bids	Feb. 15, 2005	1:00pm

The venue for the pre-bidding conference and of the opening of bids is the Administrative and Finance Conference Room, ATI building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Eligibility requirements and other bid documents can be obtained from the ATI BAC III Secretariat after payment of non-transferable/non-refundable registration fee in the amount of P 500.00.

For further inquiries, please contact the ATI BAC III Secretariat through Mr. Jose D. Tanhuco at Telephone Nos. (02) 928-8541 to 49 loc 275.

The DA-ATI reserves the right to reject all bids, to waive any formalities or defects found, or to accept such bids or to award to any contractor whose bid is considered most advantageous to the DA-ATI or to the government.

(Sgd.) DIRECTOR RONALDO M. SALUNGA
 Chairperson, ATI BAC III

(PDI-Jan. 17 & 24, 2005)



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	Starting January 15, 2005	Actual Savings	P2,000.00
		Actual Savings	P6,400.00

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 E-mail: GetSuccessNow@HarryPound.com



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"Justice on Wheels Mobile Court" of the Supreme Court....

IYO ANG KATARUNGAN WITH JUSTICE PRESBITERO VELASCO JR., (Court Administrator of the Supreme Court), is successful in its public service format that has become a vehicle to the viewers in educating them on the legal aspects governing the 3 branches of our government. Approaching its 3rd Year, produced by Millicent Productions, Inc., and will continue to bring to the viewers the knowledge about the justice system in our country. The show is being hosted by a very dynamic persona of Justice Presbitero Velasco Jr., and has a very solid background in legal education and practice, formerly an Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals, Undersecretary of the Department of Justice, National President of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (1987), Judicial and Bar Council member, a UP Law Graduate Class '71 with a ranking of No. 8 and a weighted average of 1.79 percent, he placed 6th in the 1971 Bar exams. He became a full-pledge lawyer at the age of 23, the

youngest Court of Appeals Justice at 49. Justice Velasco has been a litigator for twenty (20) years, having handed numerous civil and criminal cases and special proceedings from trial to appear before the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. Justice Velasco renders his pro bono and despite of his hectic schedule he finds time to serve the public.

This coming Sunday, January 16, 2005 at 10 pm. On his show IYO ANG KATARUNGAN...will feature "Justice on Wheels-Mobile Court" another project of Action for Judicial Reform under Chief Justice Davide administration. This project aims to institute various improvements in the judiciary in order to transform it into a more effective institution, that is more accessible to the disadvantage segment of our society, the project is a innovative intervention because it focuses the plight of the criminal offenders bringing the courts directly to the detention centers thereby facilitating the resolution of cases.

OBITUARIES
Our Dearly Beloved
VISITACION SANTOS NARCISO

(wife of Luis L. Narciso †)

Peacefully joined her Creator
 on January 15, 2005 at the age of 89.

Her loving children:

Teresita and Benjamin Ledesma
 Cecilia and Gilberto del Castillo
 Francisco and Patricia Aromin Narciso
 Agnes Narciso

Grandchildren: Angela and Aldo Fernandez, Carlo and Becky Lopez Ledesma,
 Joey and Benny Ledesma; Bunny and Tanya del Castillo; Sari, Bernadine
 and Francine Narciso; Narturi Narciso

Great granddaughter: Therese Fernandez

Relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray
 for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine,
 New Manila, Q.C.

Interment follows at the Mount Carmel Crypt
 after the 10:00 a.m. Mass on Wednesday, January 19.

In lieu of flowers, donations to San Jose Seminary
 will be appreciated.

"May God keep you in the palm of His hand,
 until we meet again."

First Death Anniversary
DR. HERMINIO A. ASTORGA

Former Vice Mayor, City of Manila
December 22, 1929 - January 19, 2004

On the occasion of his first death anniversary, his wife, Lynn Vicente, their children and their families request friends, family and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. Masses will be celebrated for his intention at the following churches on
Wednesday, January 19th, 2005:

Malate Catholic Church	7:00 am and	6:00 pm
Nuestra Sra. de Guia Parish	8:00 am and	12:15 nn
St. Anthony of Padua Parish	6:00 am and	6:00 pm
Our Lady of the Assumption Parish		6:00 pm
St. John Bosco Parish		6:00 pm
Ascension of Our Lady Parish		6:30 pm
Villa San Miguel		6:45 am
EDSA Shrine		5:30 pm
Christ The King Parish		7:00 am
St. Ignatius Catholic, Winnipeg, Canada		7:15 am
St. John Roman Catholic Church, Allentown, New Jersey		8:00 am

"You will always be in our hearts, Dad."

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you."
 John 14:1-2

Expect more inflation

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

THE INFLATION rate seen last December was the highest in almost six years: 7.9 percent year-on-year, using 1994 as the base. The spike was caused by high oil prices around the world and the impact of the typhoons.

Recall that the storms Unding, Violeta, Winnie and Yoyong slammed into the country in the last quarter, drowning more than a thousand people. They also devastated the rice, corn, and coconut crops of Luzon.

The last time the Philippines posted 7.9 percent inflation was in April 1999. It appears that the average inflation rate for the whole of 2004 is 5.5 percent. That's higher than the official Bangko Sentral target of 4.5-5 percent for the year.

From the supply side

This type of inflation is "supply-side" or "cost-push." It occurs when the supply of goods is constricted (local rice) or an important input just becomes more expensive (global oil). It's not "demand side" or arising from surging incomes or the rapid expansion of the money supply.

Expect inflation to remain at high levels in 2005. It will exceed the 4-5 percent target for this year.

The effects of the oil price hikes will linger for the first semester, even if the oil prices did indeed begin to subside globally. Because of public pressures here, oil price changes are not instantly reflected at the pump. The ups and downs of oil prices are seen in gasoline prices only after a lag of many street demonstrations. So the slide in crude oil prices will be felt in the Philippines later.

El Niño weather

This region of the planet may also experience the onset of a slight El Niño. Higher temperatures and drought may lead to lower farm output, thus pushing up food prices.

Plugging the leaks

But the other drivers of inflation in 2005 are rooted in the fiscal crisis. The government's resources are



bleeding, so it has no choice but to plug the many fiscal leaks.

Because of political lobbying, specific taxes on "sin products" (tobacco and alcohol) had not been adjusted for inflation since the comprehensive tax reform program was set up in 1997. So last December, Congress passed a law that hiked the sin taxes, and this would bring in P15 billion. (The new law was seen as watered down, not bringing in as much new revenue as needed.) In short, cigarettes and alcohol products will become more expensive.

Heavier VAT?

Then there's the value-added tax (VAT). The VAT system had been compromised due to lobbying: VAT exemptions were given to doctors, lawyers, law firms, and show business professionals. There is a move to plug such leaks, and to boost the rate. Lately the House of Representatives approved a bill hiking the VAT to 12 percent from the present 10 percent. If the Senate does likewise, the upgraded value-added tax will bite into general purchases.

Another major problem is the finances of government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs).

Servicing GOCC liabilities involves a huge sum equivalent to 3 percent of GDP.

For example, the National Power Corp. is draining the government because it charges purchased power

adjustments (PPA) of only 40 centavos, due to public pressure. But it has to pay P1.20 to the independent power producers. Just raising fees by P1.50 per kilowatt hour will cut the burden, equal to one percent of GDP.

Hiking fees

State corporations are in trouble because in the past they did not adjust their prices to realistic levels.

Increases are needed in power rates, light rail fares, and highway tolls. In this tight fiscal situation, they will likely come.

During the past years, taxes on motor vehicles were cut due to industry lobbying. It is in the government's interest to recover the lost funds at least by hiking the registration fees on motor vehicles.

To sum up, the following pressures will keep inflation high in 2005: the lagged effects of last year's oil prices, El Niño weather, the new sin taxes, likely increases in electricity bills, highway tolls, rail fares, and motor fees, and possibly a heavier value-added tax.

The government is in a real tight spot, the classic Catch-22. It really has to plug the fiscal leaks. But doing so will push up prices across the board. On balance, it's best to just bite the bullet and get the price increases over with. Don't prolong the agony.

Comments to darroyo@philonline.com

Meningococemia—Why we self destruct

I WAS in Baguio last week and saw how much the tourism industry has been hurt by media exaggeration and government incompetence.

The meningococemia scare has really succeeded in scaring away potential visitors. Most hotels were at 10 percent or lower occupancy. Restaurant owners are dismayed and losing money.

If there really were an outbreak of the disease in Baguio, then the alarm sounded by media, local Department of Health (DOH) officials, and city officials would have been a real public service.

Unfortunately, it looks like selfish interests orchestrated the Meningococemia scare.

Let us start with some basic facts about Meningococemia which, like what I did, you can get through the Internet.

I found a number of very technical articles from eMedicine authored by doctors of US medical schools. In addition, I found several articles from our own DOH, which were very informative and easier to understand.

Briefly, the DOH article defines: Meningococcal infection is brought by bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*.

The most common form of disease due to meningococcal infection is meningitis and the less common is Meningococemia.

Meningococemia is a clinical form brought about by spread of the bacteria to bloodstream causing severe signs and symptoms.

The most devastating form of Meningococemia is fulminant Meningococemia, which consists of hemorrhagic rashes, drop in blood pressure and circulating shock leading to death.

It then identifies the signs and symptoms of Meningococemia such as fever, stiff neck, convulsion in some, delirium, altered mental status, vomiting, cough, sore throat, other respiratory symptoms; pinpoint rashes then become wider and appear like bruises starting on the legs and arms, large map-like bruise-like patches. Severe skin lesions may lead

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Manuel A. Alcuaz Jr.



to gangrene, and unstable vital signs. How does meningococcal disease spread?

Infection is spread by direct contact with discharges from the nose and throat which contain the bacteria.

Although meningococcal bacteria are common, they are extremely delicate outside of the body and are not very contagious.

The bacteria spread from an infected carrier to another person through close, direct physical contact and through coughing, and sneezing, kissing. It can also spread through saliva (spit) when sharing items such as food or drinks, cups, utensils and drinking straws.

In general, people should not share anything that has been in their mouth.

Exposure to cigarette smoke increases the risk of spread of meningococci, as well as other bacteria.

Given the above mode of transmission, what went wrong?

Unfortunately media, instead of being informative, made a mountain out of a molehill. It focused on supposed victims, many of who turned out to be sick of other causes, not Meningococemia!

Media should have focused on explaining that meningococemia, unlike SARS, is not airborne. The infection is not airborne, and is only transmitted by direct contact with respiratory droplets from nose and throat of infected persons.

The Baguio City government's clean-up of the public market was good and effective for other diseases but not for meningococemia.

Worse was the city government's attempt to get hold of calamity funds by declaring a state of calamity. That is not the smartest thing to do. The

losses of the Baguio tourism industry and community are much greater than any calamity funds the city government was hoping to get.

In fact, the city government has already lost millions in taxes it could have earned from tourist business that has stayed away from Baguio in the last few months.

Unfortunately, people in the DOH and the World Health Organization are reluctant to declare Baguio safe. They must enjoy the media attention while the scare persists.

Hopefully, the real facts will eventually be disseminated. Baguio was not unsafe. I went up to Baguio twice in the last month.

Health workers should quietly go about their work in tracking down close contacts of infected persons. Giving 20,000 persons from the city public market antibiotics is an indication that the health officials do not even access DOH Internet site, which says:

Prevention and control: Preventive measures are geared toward reducing overcrowding and exposure to droplet infection. Immunization of civilians is not recommended, as duration of protection is limited.

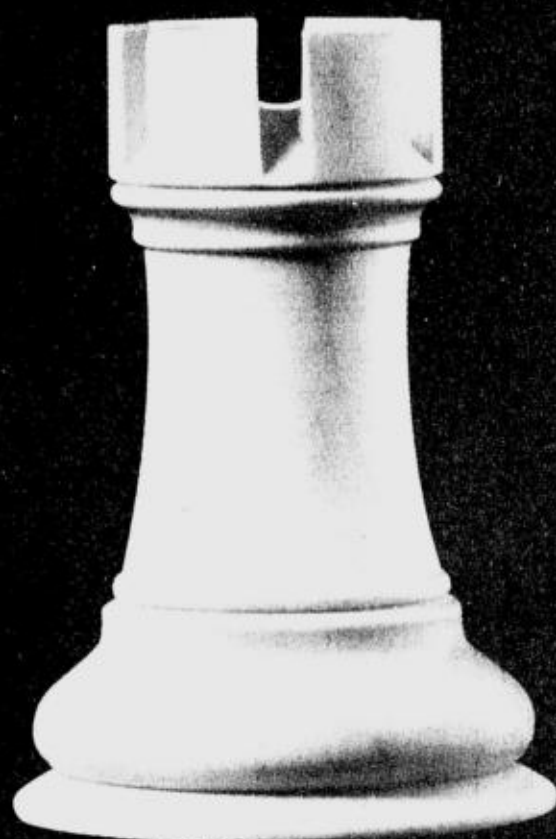
Treatment and prophylaxis: Treatment is effected by antibiotics and if given early, fatality rate is rendered less than 10 percent. Aqueous penicillin G may be given to both children and adults. Chloramphenicol may be given in cases of Penicillin allergy.

Prophylaxis is reserved for those who have intimate contact with the patient; household members, boyfriend/girlfriend, sexual partners, hospital personnel who did suctioning of secretions and/or mouth resuscitation. Rifampicin is the drug of choice and may be given to both children and adults.

Hopefully, we will all come to our senses sooner than later. Let us stop self-destructing.

And I hope Baguio will have a successful flower festival next month.

(The author is co-chair of the MAP ICT committee and president of Systems Sciences Consult Inc. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)



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WINSTON
Chua used to
stay up late at
night working
on models
and polishing
his craft.

Hobby supported his family and saw him through school

By Senen Bravo

WINSTON Chua, 49, assembled his first model kit when he was 7 years old, using only house paint and his bare hands.

Little did he know that his hobby would become his trade.

"My father gifted me a C-130 aircraft kit which I immediately pieced together," remembers Chua, the man behind Special Toy Center.

He would encourage customers to have their children get into scale modeling rather than computer games.

"During my time there was no air brush to polish a scale's surface. Everything was crude back then. I also broke some parts yet I didn't get frustrated," says Chua.

Nowadays enthusiasts can make their scales more realistic with the help of air regulator, air brush and assorted paints.

Chua's creativity knows no bounds. He creates diorama for his action figures and even manipulates their eye movements and facial expressions.

The hardworking Chua soon found himself on weekends and holidays working as delivery and errand boy at their Filipinas Bazaar on Rizal Avenue to earn enough to buy kits and sell them. His finished products

would later join the perfumes and RTWs peddled in their store.

He met hobbyist Eddie Ong, who provided him all the kits and tools on the condition that he would make models for him daily from 9 in the evening until 1 in the morning.

"I didn't mind that I hadn't got enough sleep as long as my craft improved," says Chua.

To support their waning family business and his college education, Chua decided to accept more scale modeling jobs.

He got another financial support from a friend who introduced him to Monogram and assorted paints.

In 1982, Chua studied ceramic modeling and started to do a lot of research on the subject.

"I refined the European brand and it turned out that my creation is a lot cheaper," says Chua.

Chua realized he had to be on his own. He put up his Winston Hobbycraft at the hallway of Banco Filipino on Rizal Avenue.

Hobby business arrived in the country in the early '60s and peaked in the '80s. Back then both adults and kids were avid collectors of scale models.

Dominant players in the market were American brands such as Revell, Monograms, Airfix, Testors, which

were sold at Goodwill Bookstore and Good Earth.

His first Special Toy Center branch was at Virra Mall in Greenhills when a friend sold him a 25-square-meter stall worth P180,000.

La Salle Greenhills and Xavier students were regular buyers of toys like Tomy Zoids, Tomica, Tamiya and other accessories.

Chua got the nod of Dragon Models Inc., the biggest manufacturer of model kits, to be its distributor in the country and started selling more 12-inch military action figures at Special Toy Center branches in Sta. Cruz Manila (main branch), Isetann Recto, SM Fairview and North Edsa, Ali Mall, Festival Mall and Alabang Town Center.

Rep. Raffy Biazon, himself a hobbyist, has a collection of military scales and action figures. He started five years ago and even joined IPMS, an international organization of hobbyists. He regularly attends its seminars.

"I stumbled upon their show at Alabang Town Center and I immediately got interested," says Biazon.

As an IPMS member, Chua joins a monthly meeting of professionals and students in model making sessions. He also plans to hold mall shows to gather more enthusiasts.

Lessons from the tragedy

CELLULAR phones have become a vital instrument in saving lives.

Take what happened late last year in the most affected towns of Real and Infanta, where more than 1,000 people died and millions of pesos worth of property were lost.

The soldiers, medical missionaries, miners and even media practitioners who worked beyond the call of duty deserved the nation's admiration but what important too is how advances in digital communications helped them.

Even though Real is just three hours away from Metro Manila, there are no other means of communication available in the area but through the cellular phone.

One of the lucky people who was able to use his Globe cellular phone to the fullest was chemical engineer Glenn Delica. He recounted how he and brother Alvin traveled for 20 hours from Real, most of the time walking in knee-deep mud to reach Infanta. He is managing director of TEEM Inc., an environmental engineering consulting firm based in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

His parents were staying in Infanta, with only a teenage nephew accompanying them. When they heard from the radio that the super typhoon brought waist-deep flood to Infanta, they decided to go to Quezon at once. Despite the news that a third storm was coming, they went with their two nephews.

"We started at 1 p.m. on Dec. 3, just after 'Yoyong' and after clearing some landslides at Maragondon (a part of nearby Tanauan town already). We could not count the landslides until Kinanliman (a barangay just before Real town). There are more landslides than clear road. We walked barefoot; boots, shoes, sandals were no good, only combat shoes will stay on your feet when you step on a hip-deep mud.

"We crossed all sorts of terrain, mud, rocks, logs, branches, corals. We walked down the ravine and along the rocky beach to avoid landslide. There were people from Tiguan with their children and babies trying to hike back to Maragondon, which is accessible only to buses, because they have nothing to eat in their place. We continued walking



TRANSPORTING goods to Infanta.

MANDY NAVASERO

until evening, each one of us had flashlight. It was already about 10 p.m. when we crossed the four broken bridges to Real town.

"We rode a tricycle to Infanta up to a common area (about 11 p.m.), walked again, took a rest for about an hour and walked again to Barangay Libjo, where our house is. We arrived there at 2 a.m. It was about 18 km to 20 km hiking and 12 km tricycle ride."

They ate bread and drank from artesian wells they passed. Along the way, they remained in touch with their relatives and friends, both in Infanta and Manila with their Globe cell phone. It was the messages from their loved ones that kept them warm and persevering in their journey.

Local folks attest that Globe signal remained strong in the area. Globe later also gave free calls in the affected areas.

In times of disaster, indeed, cellular phones have become very vital.

This was proven also by a group of medical missionaries from Metro Manila, who coordinated with their city-based center via digital technology.

A medical mission group provided by a Makati City-based Christian fellowship called Day By Day gave free medical services, from dental to immediate minor surgery.

One of the volunteers was Milla Alba, RN, of the UP College of Medicine. She said common ailments, besides fever, flu, cold and cough, were cases of loose bowel movements. Ongoing was an open-air surgery on the severed shoulder of a woman. There were two power generators being used by the group, each successively running for 12 hours.

"Because the barrio folks have no clean source of water, they use the murky water coming from the stream. They thought if they boil it, the bacteria will die but the fact is, there are still large content of unwanted minerals left," she said.

Day By Day also provided spiritual and psychological counseling. Alba pointed out that more than the physical ailments, the victims were more affected emotionally as they continue to be reminded of the traumatic experience.

"When there's rain and strong winds, they begin to tremble in fear because they thought there is going to be another landslide and massive flooding," nurse Alba said.

Some have already moved in to their relatives in other towns, where they can be far away, at least, from the sad memory.

Glenn, who is a Globe Platinum subscriber, moved his parents to his

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Self-improvement - I

HOME improvement is big business these days.

If a trip to your local Home Depot or Lowe's store doesn't convince you (as a group, home improvement retailers rang up an estimated \$197 billion in sales last year), just check out the latest edition of TV Guide. From hit television shows such as "Trading Spaces" to entire cable networks like Home and Garden Television, the airwaves are full of programming geared toward helping people with little or no construction experience, transform their kitchens, bedrooms, and backyards into the living spaces of their dreams.

There's nothing wrong with making your home more livable, inviting, attractive, or efficient. But while you're working on that—or at least learning how to do it by watching television or reading magazines—don't neglect another area that could always use a little improvement: yourself!

In the last issue of this column, I talked about some misconceptions people have about success that keep them from achieving their full potential. As you may recall, I stated that the secret to success doesn't lie in some mysterious formula that can only be known by a chosen few. It is determined by your willingness to improve yourself—every day, starting today.

In my life, I choose daily to improve in several key areas: intellectu-

A LEADER'S WAY

John C.
Maxwell



ally, physically, relationally, and spiritually. These daily improvements aren't necessarily huge; in fact, taken individually, they may seem rather minor. But, as I once heard a teacher explain, "Daily goals are reached by doing things which may be uncomfortable at first but eventually will become habits."

"And habits are powerful things. Habits turn actions into attitudes, and attitudes into lifestyles."

You may classify areas of potential improvement differently than I do. But the categories you choose to work on aren't nearly as important as your overall commitment to improve. Are you improving every day? Have you developed the daily discipline to say, "I'm working in these specific areas?" Do you have a clearly defined target—a way to know when you've achieved your desired result?

Whether you want to hone your public speaking skills, become a better listener, lose weight, get more organized, or advance in some other way, here are some insights about improvement that will help to guide you as you grow.

1. Don't be afraid to admit you

were wrong.

Acknowledging your mistakes proves you're wiser today than you were yesterday. If you never admit you're wrong, you're saying, "I'm not growing; I'm not wiser."

2. You will never change your life until you change something that you do daily.

This is a huge concept to grasp. People always tell me, "I'm going to make some major changes." My response to that is simple: Certain aspects of your life might need a significant overhaul, but I don't need to know about those big changes. I'm more interested in the minor change you plan to make today.

Personal improvement starts when you change something you do daily—a routine, a habit, a way of working, or interacting with other people.

Next week, I'll give you several more thoughts that will assist you with your self-improvement projects. In the meantime, think about the parts of your life that need a little work. Choose one or two, and figure out what you can do each day to improve in those areas.

The daily changes you make may not be as dramatic as the before and after pictures you see in your favorite home improvement show. But chances are, they'll be much more rewarding.

Feedback to Maxwell c/o slvgu-ru@pldtDSL.net

MOVEMENTS

URC appoints new EVP

GOKONGWEI-OWNED Universal Robina Corp. (URC) has appointed Bienvenido "Pet" Bautista as executive vice president of URC's Branded Consumer Foods Group (BCF).

URC president and chief operating officer Lance Gokongwei said that he is confident Bautista can effectively lead the URC-BCF team.

Bautista started his marketing career at Pfizer Inc. in 1969. He became president and general manager of PT Warner Lambert in 1985 to 1987 and became the corporate marketing director of Wyeth Philippines Inc.

Prior to joining URC, Bautista was the chairman of Kraft Foods, Philippines and the vice president and area director for Southeast Asia of Kraft Foods International.

Bautista also held the position of president of the San Miguel Food Group and president of San Miguel Brewing Philippines from 1995 to 1998.

A recipient of the Philippine Marketing Association Agora Award for Excellence in Marketing Management in 1994, Bautista was the first Filipino to be appointed chairman of the Jakarta International School Board of Trustees in 1986.



BAUTISTA

Bayantel appoints new CFO

BAYAN Telecommunications (BayanTel) has named Salvador "Dory" Tirona as its new chief finance officer who will directly head the key support groups of finance, controllership, logistics and legal.

Prior to joining BayanTel, Tirona played a crucial and strategic role as CFO of Maynilad Water Services Inc. particularly in implementing its rehabilitation plan.

Before that, he was a veteran executive in the automotive industry, the last post of which was SVP and general manager for Asian Carmakers Corp. and Columbian Autocar Corp. He also had stints with First Malayan Leasing Corp. and Makati Leasing & Finance Corp.

Tirona was formerly an executive officer of the Asset Privatization Trust, and had concurrent board of director positions in several key companies, a partial list of which includes Prime White Cement Corp., Island Cement Corp., National Housing Corp., Pantranco North Express Inc. among others.

P&A announces executive appointments

BENJAMIN R. Punongbayan, chair and CEO of public accounting firm Punongbayan & Araullo (P&A), announced recently the appointment of Gregorio S. Navarro as managing partner and chief operating officer and the elevation of Juan Carlos B. Robles to partner.

Navarro obtained the second highest overall rating in the October 1976 CPA licensure examinations. In 1989, the Philippine Institute of CPAs (Picpa) selected Navarro as president of the Young Picpa Achievers Award. He attended a management development program at the Kellogg School of Management of Northwestern University and the Senior Executive Program of the Columbia Business School in the United States.

Robles is a CPA both in the United States and in the Philippines, where he obtained the 11th highest overall rating in the October 1984 CPA licensure examinations. He is a member of Picpa, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators, and the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. He received the Outstanding Filipino Professional Award from the Philippine Consulate in Salpan, where he worked as a public auditor for several years, and was honored by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation for "Exceptional Service in the Public Interest" for his work as a fraud editor.

Italianni's welcomes 3 new GMs

ITALIANNI'S announces the appointment of its new general managers (GMs): Anna Maureen Llacuna of the newly opened Libis branch, and Analou Sanopal of the Tomas Morato

branch, and Gayzelle Guiang of Gateway-Araneta, which are both set to open soon.

They all graduated with a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Administration and joined Italianni's almost three years ago. "Aside from the usual written exams, role-playing and interview, we were made to walk, sing and dance," they laughingly recall. From servers and key employees to being assistant managers and now GMs, Llacuna admits: "The training Italianni's offers is the best."

As GMs, they take pride in making sure that all standards in food and guest relation are strictly followed. "Our keywords are quality, service, atmosphere and cleanliness so we make sure we adhere to them everyday," explains Sanopal.

With the expected opening of Italianni's branches in Tomas Morato and Gateway Mall soon, Sanopal and Guiang are already busy tapping potential guests from nearby areas and through alliances and event tie-ups, focusing not only on dine-in clients but also on group catering and deliveries for corporate functions.

New ADFIAP secretary general named



PERALTA

AMBASSADOR Jesus P. Tambunting, chair and CEO of Planters Development Bank and current chair of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP), announced the appointment of Octavio B. Peralta as secretary general of the Philippine-based international association.

Peralta succeeds Orlando P. Peña who has retired after serving as ADFIAP secretary general for 28 years since the founding of the organization.

Founded in 1976 under the auspices of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), ADFIAP is the focal point of all development banks and other financial institutions engaged in the financing of development in the Asia-Pacific region. ADFIAP has at present 54 member-institutions in 25 countries in the region and is a nongovernmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council.

Peralta, a mechanical engineer, started his development banking career at the Development Bank of the Philippines where he worked for 15 years, rising from the ranks, first as a technical analyst of the industrial projects department in 1976 to program director of the human resource center until he left the bank in 1991. He has extensive international exposure, having worked on various capacity building programs and events with multilateral and development organizations such as the World Bank, the ADB, the UN's International Trade Center, USAID's Asia Environmental Partnership, Germany's In-Went, Japan's AOTS and the Washington DC-based Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

7-Eleven appoints new president

JAMES Hsieh, vice chair of Philippine Seven Corp., the operator of the 7-Eleven chain of convenience stores, recently announced the appointment of Jose Victor Paterno as president effective Jan. 1, 2005. Also appointed were Sam C.P. Liu as vice president and Michael Zalamea as independent director.

Paterno, 37, joined the company in 1996. He was chief executive officer of Philippine Seven's logistics subsidiary Convenience Distribution Inc. before his appointment as president. Paterno earned his degree in mechanical engineering at Lehigh University in the US, and was part of Nestle USA's Manufacturing Management Training Program. He held various positions at the company's Freehold, New Jersey, coffee manufacturing plant from 1990 to 1993.

Sam Liu, 36, has been Philippine Seven's marketing director since 2001 and has overseen a number of the company's important marketing initiatives. Seconded from 7-Eleven Taiwan, Liu is a graduate of Tam Kang University in Taipei and earned his MBA from the Ateneo de Manila University.

Michael Zalamea, 39, was nominated by a parent company, President Chain Store Corporation of Taiwan. Zalamea is currently a director of Philippine Coastal Storage and Pipeline Corp., Clark Pipeline and Depot Co. Inc. and Wespac Holdings.

For questions, please contact Kiletz Guiang at Tel. No. 705-5223.

Lessons from the tragedy

From page B15

house in Batasan in Quezon, shared some lessons for all of us to ponder on.

"Bad experience will be worst if we will not learn lesson from it. First, we should look at ourselves before others. I, myself, am guilty about this. Have we bought and collected Narra

and hardwood furniture in our house? If yes, then we patronized those criminals [destroying] forests. Let us introduce change to our culture, let us not appreciate hardwood in our home, they should better be in the forest.

"Second, the tragedy should be at-

tributed to legal and illegal loggers alike. Legal loggers are big business with political connections who do not really have a heart for the poor people. If we continue destroying the environment, there is no equivalent human effort to reconstruct them. We earn millions, we destroy billions."

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SC revises anew rule on illegal dismissal

By Raul Palabrica

CITING the need to adjust to the changing times, the Supreme Court last November laid down a new rule for illegal dismissal cases: when an employee is dismissed for a just cause without due process, the dismissal will be allowed but the employer will indemnify the employee for the violation of his right.

The latest decision stemmed from the complaint for illegal dismissal filed by two workers of a home decorating company. The labor arbiter declared the cause of the dismissal—abandonment of work—illegal and ordered the payment of back wages, separation pay and other monetary claims.

The National Labor Relations Commission reversed the arbiter's order. It upheld the validity of the dismissal and set aside the financial awards earlier made.

When the case was brought to the Court of Appeals, the court affirmed the NLRC's finding on the merit of the dismissal, but ordered the payment of the unpaid portion of the workers' holiday, service incentive leave and 13th month pay benefits.

The adverse ruling prompted the employees to elevate the matter to the Supreme Court for final resolution.

Just cause

After reviewing the records of the case, the tribunal concluded that the workers were dismissed for a just and valid cause. They were deemed to have abandoned their work when they accepted employment in another company without formally severing their ties with their employer.

But the employer was not faultless either. It did not comply with the "due process" requirements of the Labor Code when it dismissed the workers. They were not notified in writing of the reason for their dismissal, nor were they given the opportunity to explain their side and, worse, were not informed in writing about the termination of their employment.

So the question boiled down to the effect of that failure to comply with due process to the validity of the ground for dismissal of the workers.

Past rulings

The same issue had been discussed and resolved by the tribunal many

years ago. From 1974 (the year the Labor Code took effect) to January 1989, the rule it followed was, the dismissal is illegal if the employee was not given the required notices. This finding entitles the employee to reinstatement to his former position and payment of back wages.

In February 1989, this ruling was set aside and a new one was adopted: if there is a valid reason for the dismissal but the employer did not follow due process, the dismissal may be allowed on condition that the employer pays a penalty to indemnify the employee.

The tribunal explained that "the measure of this award depends on the facts of each case and the gravity of the omission committed by the employer." In this particular case (Wenphil Corp. vs. NLRC), the penalty imposed was P1,000. This amount became the benchmark of sorts in subsequent cases.

In January 2000, or after 11 years, the justices changed their minds on the sanction to be imposed for non-compliance with the due process requirement. They ruled that a dismissal made in violation of due process would not invalidate the termination. However, the employer is obliged to pay the employee his back wages from the time of his dismissal until the court has declared that the dismissal was for a just cause. Once that declaration is made, the employee ceases to be entitled to any compensation.

Injustice

The change in policy was in reaction to the weakness of the "deterrence effect" that the Wenphil decision sought to accomplish. Since the penalty for violation of due process was minimal, many employers took for granted the notice requirement in terminating the services of their employees.

The tribunal thought that by adopting the "full back wages until the dismissal is upheld" approach, the employers will be more scrupulous in their observance of due process in disciplining their employees.

But there was a downside to that good intention: the payment of full back wages, by way of sanctions, worked to the serious disadvantage of the employers. They were forced to pay back wages in spite of the existence of a valid cause for dismissal.

This fact was not lost on some justices who expressed strong dissent over the adoption of that measure.

The appeal filed by two workers of a home decorating company last November gave the tribunal an opportunity to take another look (the third, in fact) at the Labor Code's provisions on due process in dismissal cases.

Invoking the need to maintain a good balance in labor-management relations, the tribunal unanimously decided to do away with the "full back wages" doctrine and reverted, although in a modified way, to the "sanctions" approach it adopted in the Wenphil case in 1989.

New rule

This time, the rule is: the failure to give validly dismissed employees the required notices shall result in the imposition of sanctions on the employer "depending on the facts of each case, taking into special consideration the gravity of the due process violation of the employer."

Instead of making the criteria for determining the impossible penalty open-ended, as what happened in the 1989 Wenphil case, the tribunal stated that the rules on nominal damages in civil cases shall be used as the standard in determining the award.

Using this criterion, the sanction should compensate the illegally dismissed employee for the violation of his right to due process and not to merely to indemnify him for the financial loss he may have suffered because of the termination of his employment.

This gives the labor arbiter or NLRC a lot of leeway in fixing the amount of money that should be given to the aggrieved employee to make up for his employer's failure to respect his right to due process.

Applying this new criteria in the recent case of two dismissed workers of a home decorating company, the tribunal awarded them the sum of P30,000 as compensation for the violation of their right.

By this action, the tribunal has, in effect, set the benchmark for cases of a similar nature that may arise in the future.

It remains to be seen whether the increased penalty will, as the justices envision it, "serve to deter employers from future violations of the statutory due process rights of employees."

Doctor gets a brilliant idea while on his dentist's chair

THE GREAT Benjamin Franklin accidentally discovered electricity. Hundreds of years later, a Filipino inventor developed the device to counter electricity cost, also by chance.

Dr. Luisito Figueroa was sitting in his dentist's chair when he realized that the problem was staring at him.

"Even with the swinging lamp directly at my face, the dental clinic was so poorly lighted and I know how important lighting is to practicing professionals like dentists," he said.

He immediately started to work with mirrors, chrome, aluminum, and stainless steel, and eventually, light reflectors called Maxilum. The company launched one model product then. Now they have 12 variations.

"Idea bulb"

Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention. And for someone as imaginative as Figueroa, the '70s power crisis and the desire to improve on things drive him to "create."

He is concerned about lighting and clear vision; after all, he is an optometrist. However, the idea bulb seems to light up more often than his desire to practice this profession. He then became an inventor by choice.

Maxilum is an innovative fluorescent lamp reflector with multiple light reflector surfaces. It stands for "Maximum Illumination," its principal inherent feature, at a minimum electric consumption.

It is made from non-toxic, non-flammable materials of thermally fused aluminum, bonded into a pre-treated color bond steel sheet so it would not rust or oxidize. Also, materials used are mostly Philippine-made.

Compared to the light of a bare ordinary fluorescent lamp that is scattered and thrown in all directions (thus wasting light) Maxilum is scientifically designed and engineered in "Reflectodynamics."

While its different angle surfaces are designed to control the behavior of light; its multiple light reflecting

services gather wasted light and redirects this into the working plane or area where it is needed.

"Aside from gathering 80-90 percent of incident light, it produces an even distribution of light without glare and locks in deflected or wasted light, then redirects it to the desired area for uniform and maximum illumination," Figueroa explains.

With Maxilum, all wayward lights are trapped, redirected and used maximally, making it an energy-saving device. The end result of all these is "de-lamping"—a process by which one reduces the number of lamps of existing fluorescent fixtures in an area.

Then there was light

Figueroa admits it was also a "grope in the dark" when he was just beginning.

"When I sought financial help from government and private institutions to fund Maxilum, everyone discouraged me saying there is no hint of technology in my invention," he recalls.

But after securing a BOI registration and copyright for Invention, Utility and Design from the Patent offices in the Philippines, United States and with two other pending patents in Japan and UK, Figueroa's problem was half solved.

He cautions: The other half he had



MAXILUM inventor Dr. Luisito Figueroa (right) with son Don.

to deal with was the acceptability of the product and infringement dilemma.

He cautions: "Infringed products, though similar in appearance, does not give the same high quality performance and durability as with Maxilum, which a layman will be made to believe." This fact, he says, has been proven by companies who used to carry infringed products but was "de-lamped" by Maxilum.

Marketing-sales manager and son, Don Figueroa explains, "We do everything: survey the place, audit the existing lighting fixtures, do a comparative cost analysis, even do the cleaning if necessary."

Among their major clients include government offices, manufacturing

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Pinoys don't have to go abroad to earn



WILSON and Jenny

From page B20

When sales of fries leveled off, they gave up Fries 'R' Us and moved on to other ventures. One of the earliest was Car Plus, a car accessories shop—again inside Victoria Plaza and the very first inside a shopping mall. Over the years, this spawned additional branches and allied services. For Wilson and Jenny, employment is no longer an option.

Touch of silver

After closing a failed trading venture in 1993; Jorgen, a Swede, and Bing, a Filipino; decided to put up their own business to the backburner. By that time, they had settled in Tagum, her hometown in Davao del Norte. They were married for 14 years, 10 of which they spent in Sweden where their two daughters were born.

With business out of the picture, Bing became a part-time director for the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which had many miners as members. Jorgen, on the other hand, pursued his interest in small-scale mining and learned the ropes of the mining trade, of which Tagum was a known as trading center for precious metals.

In 1995, the national government funded the initial equipment for the development of the jewelry industry. Together, government agencies and the local chamber offered a two-week training program in basic jewelry making skills. The hope was to encourage local people to process the precious metals and develop Tagum as the Meycauayan of the South. However, the program didn't progress after the training. Bing got increasingly frustrated, but always with the thought that "they couldn't understand the plight of the manufacturers because they were not in the business."

Two years later, they met a master silversmith from Baguio, a place famous for silvercraft. The man had gone to Davao with his father and brother to make fine jewelry and silvercraft in partnership with a local trader. When they finished their contract, the brothers decided to stay in Tagum, partly because silver was getting scarce in Baguio. The brothers and their work inspired Jorgen and Bing to set up a silvercraft enterprise with other investors. They took in the two brothers, both master-craftsmen, as in-house contractors, making one a major partner. At the same time, the company started to hire local unskilled and semi-skilled workers, who were slowly trained in jewelry making: from basic metalworking to finishing.

That same year, Bing was introduced to the religious circle and to a

priest who was going to be consecrated as bishop. To mark the occasion, Davau Handtouch was asked to produce souvenir items for the Papal Nuncio and other important guests. This started the company on its first line, that of gift items which would include wedding and anniversary giveaways, bookmarks, and letter openers.

The following year, the country's centennial, was even better. Davau's good fortune began with an innocent remark from their younger daughter. "Mama, why don't you make a centennial pin?" And they did. Priced reasonably at P100 apiece, it received such a good reputation and became a status symbol. Sales zoomed when some government agencies made it compulsory for their employees to wear it. This initiated the company's second line: silver jewelry and fashion accessories.

Then a balikbayan placed an order for a 60-piece dinner set of sterling silver. As the company was preoccupied with pin production, Davau Handtouch did the special order in-between jobs and managed to deliver it in four months. The company had branched out to tableware, its high-end line.

As it built its network and reputation, Davau Handtouch was invited to Manila's FAME where its display of jewelry and tableware—mixing silver and kamagong—caught the attention of a Malacañang official. She placed an order of tableware as the President's official gifts to foreign dignitaries.

Considering their kind of clientele, Davau Handtouch only makes items to order. The only exceptions are those they make for display.

Unlike most entrepreneurs who strike out on their own, Beth was forced into business, but not by inher-



BING and Jorgen Silverberg

itance. Her exposure in business dates back to when she was growing up. Her Dad worked as a driver for Aguinaldo Development Corp. And her Mom, to make ends meet, cooked and served *ulam* to the factory workers. When her Dad was given a logging concession for services, he set up a sawmill and exported lumber. Around the same time, her Mom expanded into a canteen and diversified into making sweets and cakes and informal lending. It was in the latter that Beth got involved, to collect *pautang*. She hated it, besides she never liked taking orders from her Mom.

With her degree in economics from the Jesuits, Beth told her Mom she wanted to be a social worker; to which her Mom retorted: *Susi! Gutom na ang mga kausap mo, gutom ka din. Papaano mo sila matutulungan?* Beth didn't understand this at the time, but she definitely was not going to work for her. She applied for a job in a commercial bank.

When her Mom learned that Nieva's Shellcraft was for sale, she decided to buy the business. So when Beth told her that she was hired by a bank, her Mom only said, "I have bought a business for you to manage." As part of the deal, Beth had to retain the existing workforce of 10. She could also consult the former owner any day for a month. That was how she learned where to buy and cut the shells, how to make the base for the frames and dividers, and how to cost her products.

Since she couldn't match the prices of Cebu shellcraft, Beth decided to change her line of products. Seeing the canteen next door was using wood and bamboo waste from her father's sawmill, she asked for the better ones. She turned these into office accessories, such as penholders, letter holders, and letter openers. Once she thought these were good enough, she brought some samples to Manila and showed these to Rustan's. These were rejected with an advice: "You have to improve your quality."

While in Manila, she decided to visit Tesoro's and ShoeMart, with the latter ordering half a dozen of each of the items. Beth recalls, "Masaya na 'ko. At least I had an order." But her Mom felt otherwise. "A-anim? Magkano 'yan lahat? At magkano ang ginastos mo sa eroplano? Papaano ka mabubuhay sa ganyan?" But Beth remained on Cloud 9 and could only say, "Ma, huwag kayong mag-alala."

As her workers did ShoeMart's order, Beth changed the name of the business from Nieva's Shellcraft to Nieva's Arts and Crafts. She also asked her painter if he could give their wood products an automotive finish. He said yes, but he would need putty and automotive lacquer in addition to the paint. Once he was done, she asked some workers to hand paint designs emulating those of the T'boli and Mandaya tribes. The following year, she brought some samples to Rustan's again. This time she was successful. These were sold as high-end products that became part of Rustan's "The Best of the Philippines" collection. Complementing these were repeat orders from Tesoro's and ShoeMart for her bamboo and woodcraft.

They have more stories to tell. And there are more stories of other entrepreneurs, of their twists and turns, of their successes and failures in Couples in Business. Some of them became entrepreneurs by chance, others by choice, and still others by force.

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From page B17

firms, department stores, banks, educational institutions, churches, pharmaceutical companies, oil and chemical plants, hotels and offices.

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Maxilum also started tapping the export processing zones, industries and garment factories like the Pilot project PH Garments in China, another in California and other Asian countries.

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To provide helpful guidelines to the benefits of beginning and prospective real estate investors, dealers, developers and realty professionals, a seminar on "Investing in Real Estate", will be conducted by the Urban Institute of Real Estate on Feb. 16, 1:30 to 6 p.m. at the Asian Institute Of Management Conference Center (AIM-ACCEED), Benavidez cor. Trasierra Streets., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

The four-hour lecture will cover: review of the different investment motivations; why invest in real estate?; pitfalls and traps in real estate investments; why real estate appreciates; pros and cons of investing in vacant land; different areas of opportunities, techniques and how-to's in real estate investment such as buy and sell or lease; build and sell; rehabilitation of foreclosed and damaged

properties; master leasing; converting apartments to townhouses or condominiums; developing vacant/raw lands; and an overview of the need-to-learn knowledge before investing.

The succeeding days on the same time and venue is a series of other topics, which can be attended separately, as follows: Feb. 17—Property Development and HLURB Rules And Regulations; Feb. 18—Real Estate Finance and Investment Analysis; Feb. 19—Joint Ventures and Syndication for Real Estate Projects; Feb. 21—Property Management and Real Estate Appraisal, and Feb. 22—A Complete Course on Installment Sales; Feb. 23—How to Start and Manage A Successful Real Estate Brokerage Company; Feb. 24—Legal Aspect of Sale, Mortgage and Lease; Feb. 25—Taxation Aspects of Real Estate Transactions; and Feb. 26—Mathematics of Real Estate Investment.

Lecturer will be Enrico S. Cruz, a licensed real estate consultant, broker and appraiser and real estate fellow.

For more information call the Urban Institute at 681-0928, or email: urbanet@pacific.net.ph.



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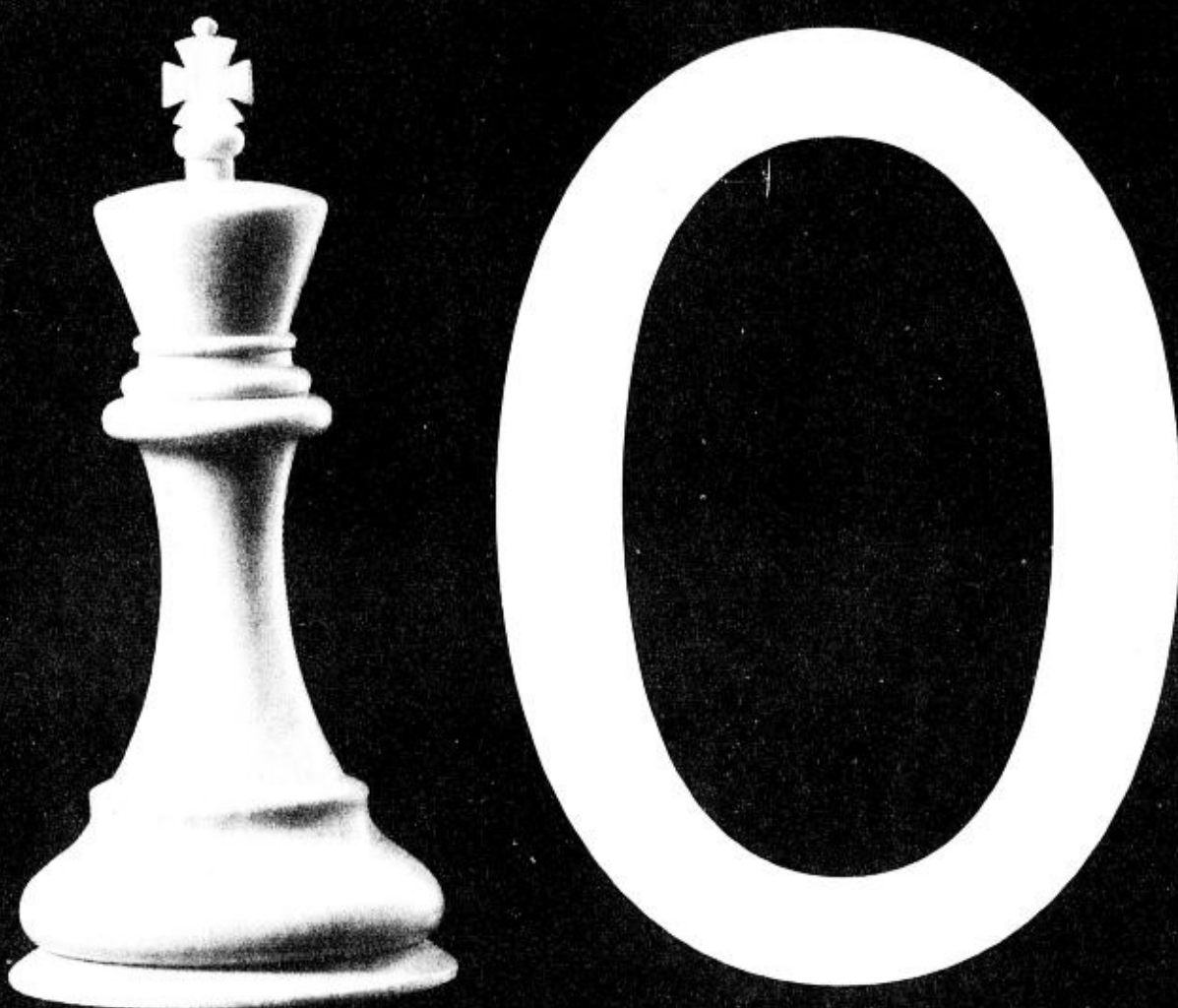
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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

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Pinoys don't have to go abroad to earn

By Salvador I. Sibayan
UP Institute for Small-Scale
Industries

WHERE nothing else will grow, a seed will not, a fetus will not. In both plant and animal kingdoms, the environment must be conducive for growth.

If the situation happens to be hostile, it only means two things for a species: adapt or perish.

In our environment where jobs are few, the only option most people recognizes is overseas work, believing that the grass is always greener elsewhere.

Never mind the social costs of family separation. Most forget there is another option—one that they can do staying put and making the most of the local situation.

The following stories demon-

strate that the latter option is doable:

From fries to cars

Wilson and Jenny were both employed in Manila, he in a trading company and she in a commercial bank. When his brother asked him to oversee the operations of the Victoria Plaza in Davao City, Wilson accepted. Jenny followed some months later

after her bank granted her request to be transferred to its Davao City branch. Little did they know that their days as employees were numbered.

When a national brand of French fries was just starting to make its presence in Manila, a friend of his brother in Manila wanted to introduce something similar in Davao. After a few meetings, Wilson and Jenny saw

the potential and set up a corporation with his brothers and a few associates. At the back of their minds, they could always go back to getting employed in case the venture failed.

Fries 'R' Us opened with one cart at Victoria Plaza in 1995. It caught up in no time. With sales skyrocketing, the couple opened additional outlets. The work was too much for Jenny. Being a CPA,

not only did she have to set up controls, she had to pass by Wilson's office for the daily reports after putting in her usual time at the bank. At home, she would spend another eight hours to attend to the accounting side of their business. Four months on the way with their second child and with no weight gain, Jenny resigned from the bank.

PINOYS/B18

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Holcim Awards is a competition of the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction based in Switzerland. The independent Foundation is an initiative of Holcim Ltd, one of the world's leading suppliers of cement, aggregates, concrete and construction-related services with Group companies and affiliates in more than 70 countries.

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BUSINESSMonday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Pinoys don't have to go abroad to earn

By Salvador I. Sibayan
UP Institute for Small-Scale
Industries

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"TREE of Life"
by Cris Cruz

Birthday homage to Manansala

BIRTHDAY/ CZ



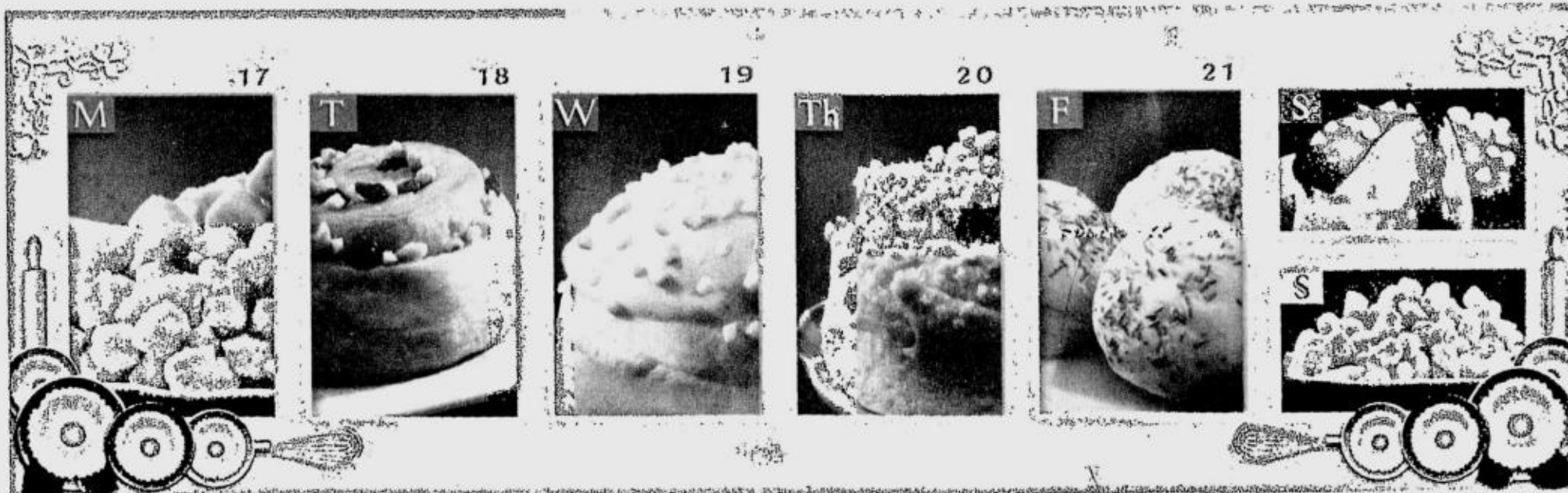
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"ADRIFT in the Depths" by Jhoanna Reasari

Young, emergent talents draw their 'Self-Portrait'

BATCH 2000 of Fine Arts major in Painting of the University of Santo Tomas will mount "Self Portrait" at the Art Center (4/F Bldg. A, SM Megamall) from Jan. 22-Feb. 6. Opening reception will be on Jan. 22 at 6 p.m.

The exhibit brings together the UST Painting graduates, many of whom have become exciting emergent voices in the art scene, after five years since their thesis exhibition. The show, which is premised on artistic identity, shows the artists' varying styles and artistic inclinations.

Participating artists are Jo Austria, Jeps Belen, Julito Barao, Laurence Borsoto, Nirvan Cantara, Leo Castillo, Albert Chavez, Ryan de Guzman, Alexie De Torres, Pedro Garcia II, Linslee, Michelle Pauline Lim, Paul Greco, Felix Petel II, Jhoana Resari, Margaret Rodrigues, Martin Sacramento, Anrmand Santos, CJ Tañedo, Jason Tanjuakio, Michelle Empleo-Ventura.



"PORTRAIT" by Michelle Pauline Lim



"SELF-PORTRAIT" by CJ Tañedo

Malang's 77th birthday show at Crucible; Morada at Joaquin



MALANG beside "Woman"



"WOMAN" by Malang

MALANG Santos will celebrate his 77th birthday with an exhibition "7 + 7" on Jan. 20-Feb. 13 at Crucible Gallery, Artwalk, 4/L Megamall A. There will be seven artworks on canvas and seven artworks on paper. Call 6356061.

JERRY Morada opens Galerie Joaquin's 2005 season with "Pag-ibig ni Maria" on Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. at the gallery's San Juan shop (2F, 371 P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills). In some 30 paintings, Morada depicts Filipino women with accent on strength of character. The women re in dramatic and dynamic gestures, in various moods and costumes. Call 7239253, 7239418.

ILMA and Ir Barayuga have an ongoing exhibit, "Chromata" until Jan. 21 at the lobby of Philamlife (United Nations Avenue, Ermita, Manila). The exhibit features color abstractions in gouache, watercolor and acrylic and a monochromatic treat in black and white with pencils, charcoal and techpen as media.

ALLIANCE Française de Manille presents the artworks of Center for Bikol Art Foundation, Inc., on Jan. 17-Feb. 4 at the Alliance Total Gallery (209 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati). Participating artists include Gil Bien, Joey Ibay, Lupo Grageda, Albert Bajamundi, Pat Noveno, Johnny Magdasoc, Freddie Gonzales, Maya Muñoz, Alain Cuchas Llaguno, Roger Monasterial and Archie Perez. Call 8957585/8957441.

ALLIANCE Française de Manille also presents Dante Perez's "Uncultured" until Jan. 28 at its Alliance Annex Gallery (2/F LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati). The paintings indicate surrealist and meditative moods, probably derived from his recent travels to India and Bali and his strong fascination with the esoteric. Call 8957585/8957441.

ROMEO Lee's mixture of the irreverent, the macabre and the comic is at the core of his latest one-man exhibit, ongoing until Jan. 25 at Finale Art Gallery (Megamall). Entitled "The Leeling," the show consists of oil paintings heavy on imagery, a free-form combo of autobiography, appropriation, fantastical monsters, comic characters, folklore and pop references. Call 6342410/6342411.

GALLERIA Duemila mounts Tony Twigg's "No Borders" starting today until Jan. 31 at 4/F The Artwalk, Megamall A. This show of new timber constructions and drawings in oil pastel and paint is a dialogue that ignores borders and captures a spirit that echoes both Filipino and Australian sensibilities. Call 6343261/8319990.

THE DRAWING Room mounts Mia Herbosa's new portrait drawings, all graphite on paper, a few water-

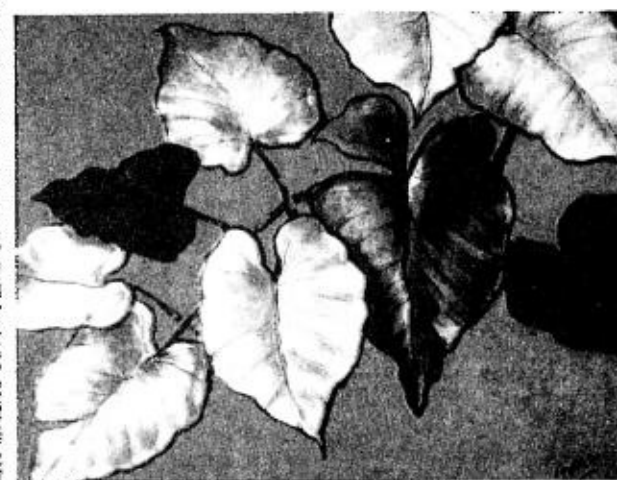
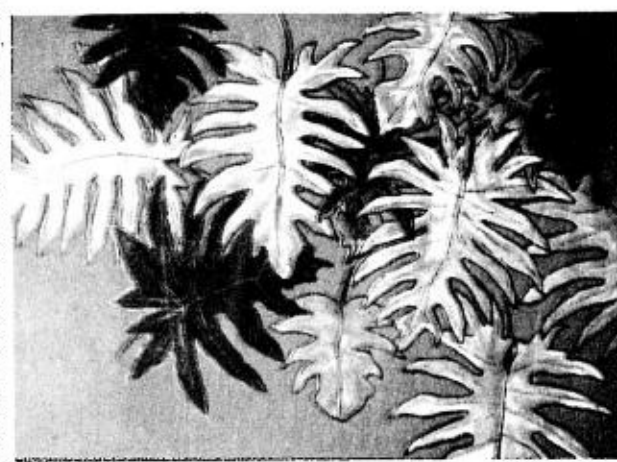


FIVE senior traditional Ifugao priests adopted Dr. Joaquin Palencia as a native son of Ifugao and gave him the Ifugao name Kimmayong in a ritual sponsored by the Ifugao State College of Agriculture and Forestry (ISCAF). Palencia was honored for the work he has done on the Ifugao rice god and numerous international publications he has authored on the subject. He is a lead researcher for a research consortium between ISCAF and Benguet State University which seeks to investigate the Ifugao rice god, its place in Ifugao culture and its applications to contemporary Ifugao life and culture.

colors, oil and select etchings. The exhibit runs until Feb. 7 at the G/F Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Avenue, Makati. Call 8977877/8976990.

THE YEAR of the Rooster New Year Greetings stamps are now available in all post offices nationwide. The designs were done by the Philippine Postal Corporation's in-house designs Jesus Alfredo delos Santos and Alfonso Divina. Call 5270108.

RICCO-RENZO Galleries will hold Artalks by Italian-trained and Italian-based Filipino art restorer, Anna Garcia on Jan. 20-Feb. 12. The talks are slated every Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 1:30-5 p.m., in Bel-Air, Makati. Call 8982542 or 43.



"PHILODENDRON"

Sale of Malaysian envoy's art works to benefit typhoon victims

THE EMBASSY of Malaysia is holding a sale of artworks by former Ambassador M. Taufik for the benefit of the recent typhoon victims. The artworks completed in Manila and are priced between P15,000 - P25,000 only. Forty

percent of the proceeds will go to the Philippine National Red Cross. The works may be viewed at the Malaysian Embassy (107 Tordesillas Street, Salcedo Village), between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Call 817-4581.



"MUSHROOMS"

Birthday homage to Manansala

From page C1
ing in his drawings.

Onglepho also recalls spending a few days in Davao in May 1957, where he also took the opportunity to draw scenic landscapes on the spot.

Using mainly his memories as pictorial references, Onglepho uniquely lends different emotions and perspectives to every composition. As a result, the works do not become representational but deeply personal interpretations of nature.

While he has often used both sharp and muted colors to emphasize his departure from

realism, Onglepho now tries to test the power of black and white to underscore his attention to detail.

Revisiting the basics

Cris Cruz feels that going back to black and white is revisiting the basics in art school.

Cruz, who first dabbled in advertising, says that the techniques he uses in this new set of works are basically the same he uses in his colored pieces. There is just more focus on the strokes and composition.

In fact, Cruz said that Manansala had seen his early works and encouraged him to go full

time in art.

Cruz mainly uses photographs as references. He zooms in on his flowers and fills the space as possible, heightening the intensity.

As chairman of the Saturday Group of Artists, Cruz focuses on community service, such as free art workshops and art auction for charities. Malang and Onglepho also take part in the outreach services.

"The Birthday Exhibit" formally opens at the Asia Art Gallery at 6 p.m. on Jan. 21 and runs until Feb. 6. Guests of honor include Lily T. Chua, Andrea T. Ong, and Julie C. Teh. Call 6321433.

Fellowships to UP writing workshop offered

LIKHAAN: The UP Institute of Creative Writing has extended the deadline for submission of entries to the 44th UP National Writers Workshop to Jan. 31, 6 p.m. Postmarked entries will be accepted.

The workshop has been scheduled from March 27 to April 9 at UP Baguio. Twenty fellowships are available, 15 in Filipino and English, and the other five for writers in Iloko, Bikol, Waray, Sugbuanon, Hiligaynon & Kinaraya, depending on merit. The grant cover board, lodging and stipend.

The textual requirements are: six poems,

two short stories or two one-act plays. Mixed genres/experimental pieces will be considered. All the entries should be in one language (English or Filipino, as the case may be). Combined or incomplete submissions will be disqualified.

The technical requirements are: only the *nom de plume* should be on four separately bound, computer-encoded hard copies (font size 12); an MS Word diskette containing the entries; and a sealed letter envelope with a cover letter, a resume (with birthday and contact numbers), an attestation of originality, a

slip of paper with name & *nom de plume* together, and a 2" x 2" ID photo.

Manuscripts in regional languages should be accompanied by Filipino or English translations.

Submissions should be sent to: Director V. E. Carmelo D. Nadera Jr., Likhaan: The UP Institute of Creative Writing, 2/F Bulwagang Rizal University of the Philippines, 1101 Dilliman, Quezon City.

Fellows from previous UP workshops need not apply. Call 9221830 or 9818500 loc. 2117.

Forum on research and humanities at UST

THE CENTER for Creative Writing and Studies of the University of Santo Tomas will hold the 13th Ustingan forum on Jan. 25 at 3 p.m. at the CCWS workshop room, St. Raymond's (AB-Commerce) Bldg., UST campus, Manila.

The forum, which is the CCWS's contribution to UST's 394th founding anniversary, will tackle "Creativity and Research."

Speakers include Centennial Literary Prize winner Cirilo Bautista (research in fiction writing), poet-critic and CCWS direc-

tor Ophelia Dimalanta (research in poetry), playwright and historian Jose Victor Torres (research in history writing), journalist Lito Zulueta (research in literary journalism), and UST Center for Intercultural Studies director Cynthia Luz Rivera (research in cultural studies).

Dr. Gloria Bernas, assistant to the UST rector for research and development, will deliver a special message.

The forum is open to the public. Call CCWS, Tuesday to Saturday, at 4061611 loc. 8281.



NICANOR Perlas



EMILY Abrera



NESTOR Jardin



MONIQUE Wilson



TONY Tan Caktiong

'Karangalan' conference at the CCP

OVER two dozen globally and nationally renowned Filipino leaders, artists and achievers will speak and perform at the First National Conference and Festival on "Karangalan," Jan. 21-23 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP).

Under the theme, "Mobilizing Excellence for Creating a Visionary Philippines," the festival will tackle the following topics: "Challenges Facing the Philippines," "Can the Philippines Handle Globalization," "Toxic Futures—Nature's Revenge," "Is There A Future for Our Country?," "The OFW Phenomenon and the Youth," "Culture and Integral Sustainable Development," "Powering the Philippine Future with the Sun and Renewable Energies" and "The Role of Business in Nation-Building."

"There is widespread despair and cynicism about the future of the Philippines. But there is hope, because we have what it takes to build



LOBOC Children's Choir

a better country. We have to acknowledge it and build upon it to create the kind of Philippines that we dream of," says Nicanor Perlas, spokesperson and executive committee member of Karangalan. Perlas won the 2003 Right Livelihood Award or Alternative Nobel Prize, the UN Environmental Global 500

Award, and The 1994 Outstanding Filipino Award (Tofil).

Over 5,000 youth and women advocates, students and teachers, religious and educational leaders, cultural workers and artists, community and basic sector organizers, government professionals and officials, business executives and work-

ers, are expected to attend the event. Over 30 organizations and networks are co-sponsoring the conference.

The speakers include: Gerry Ablaza, Asia Business Leader Award and Asia CEO Choice 2004; Emily Abrera, chair, CCP; Walden Bello, Right Livelihood Award 2003 (Alternative Nobel Prize); Sheila Coronel, 2003 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism; Tony Tan Caktiong, World Entrepreneur of the Year, 2004; Chin Chin Gutierrez, Time Magazine 2003 Asian Hero and TOWNS 2004; Von Hernandez, Goldman Environmental Prize 2003 (Environmental Nobel); Nestor Jardin, president, CCP; Perlas, PNOC Solar Project Team, Energy Globe World Award for Sustainability (Oscar for Environment) 2003; and Jess Robredo, 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Award 2000 for government service.

Artists who will perform include the Loboc Children's Choir, award-



"MAGNIFICO"

ed best children's choir in the world; the Madrigal Singers, winner of the cultural gold medal at the 2004 Olympics; the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra; Grace Nono; TOWNS awardees Monique Wilson and Kuh Ledesma; Gary Granada; the Apo Hiking Society; and Joey Ayala.

There will be a performance of the Hudhud epic, one of Unesco's 19 masterpieces of oral literature, and a showing of the film "Magnifico," grand prize winner at the International Children's Film Festival in Berlin.

Call 6871309, 6871312 or 6877482.

ALIWW honors the late visual artist Pacita Abad

THE ATENEO Library of Women's Writings (ALIWW) will honor the late visual artist Pacita Abad at 4 p.m. today, with a program that will showcase her multifaceted talent and passion for the arts and for life. Dubbed "Parangal for Pacita Abad," the event will be held at the St. Thomas More Garden of the Ateneo de Manila University campus in Loyola Heights.

Monday is the 40th day since

Abad's passing. She died in Singapore Dec. 7 after a three-year battle with lung cancer. She had just turned 58.

Her ashes were brought to the Philippines by her husband, Jack Garrity, and buried on a hill in her native Batanes.

Highlights of the ALIWW tribute will be a lecture on Abad and her art by Corazon S. Alvina, director of the National Museum; and an

exhibition at the Pardo de Tavera Room of the Rizal Library of select works by the artist, as well as personal correspondence and photographs and other memorabilia.

A lecture-exhibit to honor a Filipino woman in the visual arts has been an annual ALIWW event for the last five years, made possible through the support of the Helenica Foundation.

Organizers of the affair—Alv-

ina, Rita Ledesma and Felice Sta. Maria, all past presidents of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila—request guests to come in colorful Filipiniana attire. Guests are also encouraged to bring photographs, published articles, video footage, letters, and other memorabilia of Pacita Abad that they may have, for reproduction or donation to ALIWW's archives and/or to Funda-

cion Pacita, the foundation that Garrity has established in his wife's memory.

Fundacion Pacita aims to continue Abad's artistic legacy and programs in support of young artists from emerging Asian countries.

ALIWW, an archival facility within the Ateneo's Rizal Library, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

Japan Foundation holds Nihongo speech contest

THE JAPAN Foundation-Manila, which promotes cultural exchange through Japanese language education, announces the 2005 Nihongo Speech Contest to be held at the College of St. Benilde Theater on Feb. 19.

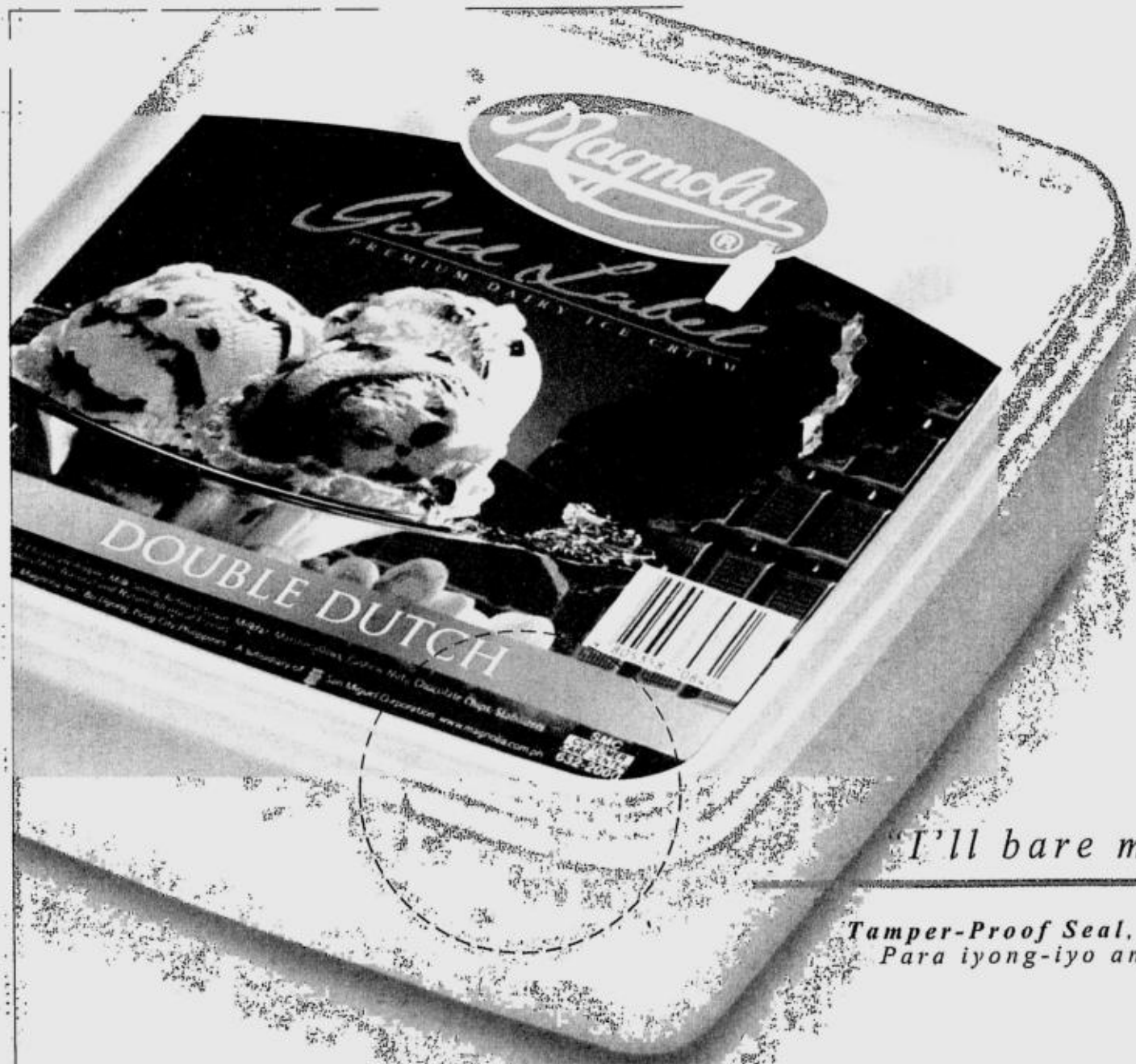
The speech contest on its 32nd year is a major event in celebration of the annual Philippines-Japan Festival.

The contest is a platform for Filipino students and professionals to demonstrate their linguistic skills through articulating an original composition written by themselves on a theme of their choice. It attracts high-caliber contestants from the country's numerous language institutes and colleges/universities offering Japanese language courses. Winners will take part in an all-expense-paid, week-long study tour in Japan; all qualified contestants will receive consolation prizes.

The deadline for submission of the duly accomplished application form with a written copy and a recording of the speech will be on Feb. 1. Contact the Japan Foundation, Manila 12/F Pacific Star Bldg., Makati Avenue, Makati City (tel. 8116155 to 58 and fax 8116153).

A similar contest will be held in Davao (c/o Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku - MKD Nihongo Center tel. 082-2330013).

The 3rd Speech Contest in Cebu will be held on Jan. 22 (SM Cebu City Conference Center Hall A B). Entries should be submitted to Japanese Association Cebu, Inc., 5/F Clotilde Commercial Center, M.L. Quezon Street, Casuntingan, Mandau City; tel. 032-3437662/ fax 032-3437663.

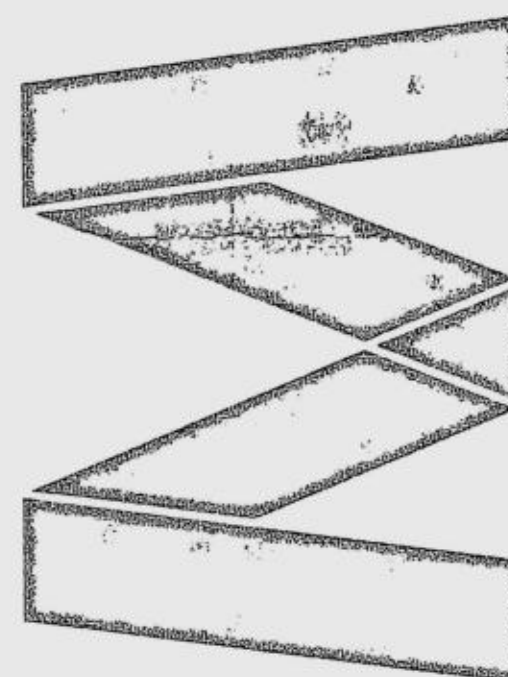
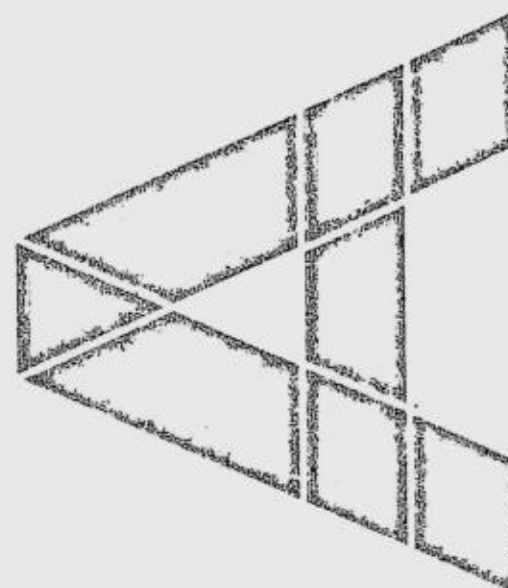
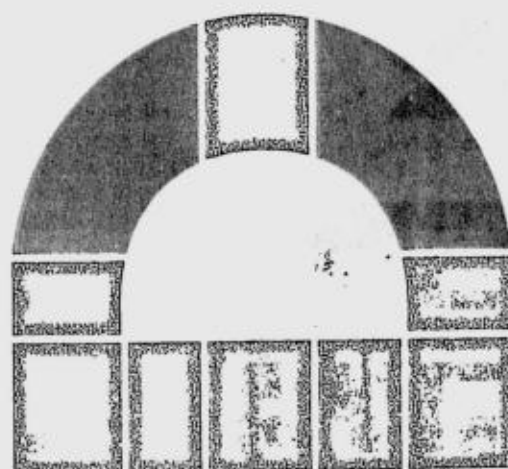
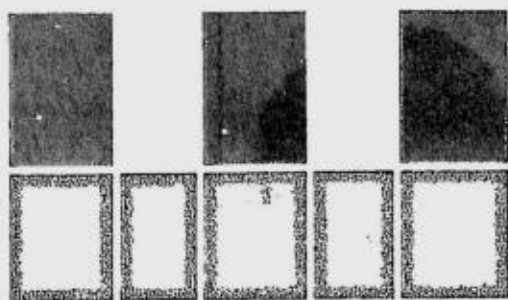


"I'll bare my soul only to you."

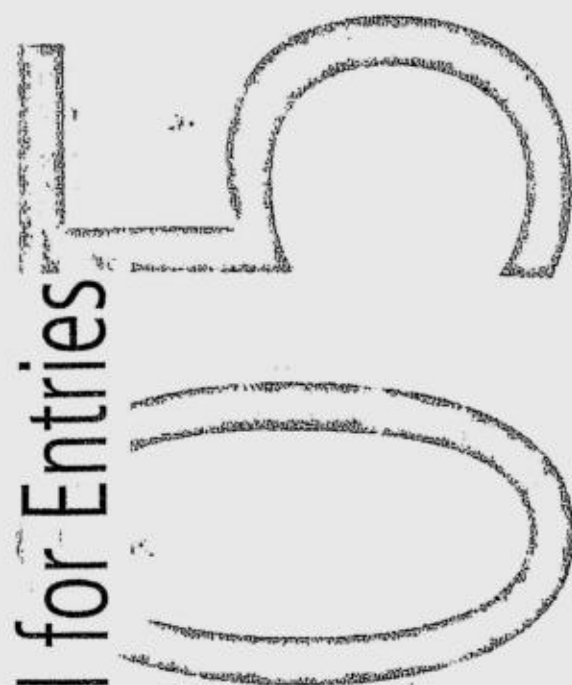
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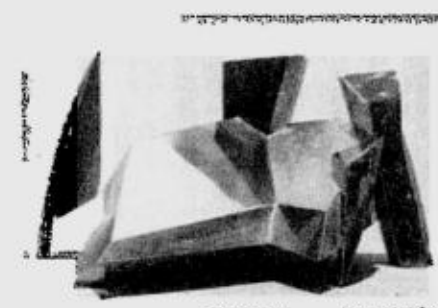
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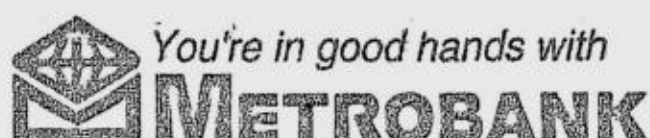
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Fab and Pinoy

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

NOSTALGIA is big business in music these days, and few bands dish it out better than Area One.

This is evident in the growing number of followers who flock to the Hard Rock Café Wednesday nights to watch Cash Manalang, John Lesaca, Bert de Leon and Roy Marinduque perform songs culled mainly from The Beatles' rich discography.

Childhood friends and neighbors Manalang and Lesaca had long toyed with the idea of putting up a band dedicated to the legacy of the greatest group of all time. But only last year did they finally rescue that idea from the back burner to become Area One. Fans who have since discovered them and turn up at their gigs are wondering what took them so long.

Timing, in a word. Lesaca told INQUIRER Entertainment that while the music of The Beatles has remained fresh 40 years after they first took the British and American airwaves by storm, the generation of audiences in the late 1980s was not yet ready for a serious revival. This is no longer true today, when teenagers and young adults are exposed to the "classics" and "standards," thanks to Michael Buble, Robbie Williams, Harry Connick Jr. and even that old fogie Rod Stewart.

So exposed, in fact, that even young bands have been turning to old songs to perk up their repertoire. If young ones could do it, what more the musicians reared on those very songs?

This is where Area One comes into the picture.

Getting together

In March 2004, Cash and John got together to get the plan rolling once and for all. Problem was, where to find two more?

John recounted: "It so happened that I was invited to be a judge in this singing contest and Bert de Leon was also a judge. We talked about what we were doing and I mentioned that I planned to put up a band that would sing Beatles songs. He got very excited and said that he wanted to join. I said sure."

He didn't even know if Bert could sing, John said. But shortly after, when the three of them got together for the first jamming, Bert proved that he could hold his own against the two more established musicians. And as a for-

mer band member and executive at the old Blackgold Records, he was no stranger to the industry.

"It was amazing," John recalled. "The instant we started playing, our guitars [were synchronized] and we immediately knew the voices we would take. Everything just fell into place. It was magic. We thought, 'This is it!'"

For the fourth and last member, the three initially went for session musician Mon Espia, who used to be in popular folk group Labuyo. Within the month, Area One played its first gig at the Greenbelt 2 grounds.

"We named the group Area One," Cash said, "because that was where John and I grew up. We were campus boys at the University of the Philippines."

SHOW TIME

Coming-out party

But the band's coming-out "party" was as front act for last year's concert of the British duo Chad and Jeremy at Aliw Theater. Area One was an instant hit, and not a few said they should have been the main act. Many were scratching their heads, though, because they were not used to seeing John without his trademark violin... and singing at that.

"Actually I grew up with both instruments," John said. Cash, on the other hand, said he learned to play guitar from John's brothers.

"I would go over to their place and I watch John's brothers play," Cash recalled. "I didn't even have one of my own."

Bert described his stint with Area One as a welcome change. He has always worked behind the camera, most notably as director of "Eat Bulaga," the country's longest-running noontime show. "I enjoy it [Area One] so much, that if I could only earn a living from singing, I will drop everything and do that," he said.

Espia subsequently gave way to session musician Roy Marinduque, who left another band to join Area One full-time as lead guitarist.

The guys agree that every song by The Beatles "has its own unique traits." John elaborated: "[Each one] is such a joy to listen to and study. There is always a musical surprise."

Still, from simply covering the songs, the Pinoy Fab Four have injected a little bit of their own personalities into the routine although, Bert insisted, "We have no design."

Things just happen naturally every time, Bert added. "We look forward to every gig. I guess the people can also see that we are having fun."



AMAZING SYNCHRONICITY. Cash Manalang, Roy Marinduque, John Lesaca and Bert de Leon, the quartet also known as Area One, keep The Beatles' magical music alive and find a "surprise" at every turn.

JOSEPH AGCAOILI

There's life after James Bond

JAMES Bond fans are disappointed about Pierce Brosnan's decision to stop playing the British spy on the big screen. But Brosnan is adamant about doing more challenging films, despite the obvious perks of portraying the title character of the world's most prosperous film franchise.

People familiar with Brosnan's filmography understand why he's opted to act in other kinds of movies, despite the smaller talent fees they offer. Brosnan is really a gifted dramatic actor who knows how to get under the skin of the character he's playing.

Portraying James Bond made him rich and popular, but there simply wasn't enough depth to the British secret agent for him to sink his teeth into, or to challenge his thespic resources. So, after he had mined the big

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

break for what it was worth, he opted out.

Recently, we got another insight into Brosnan's thespic makeup when we caught an episode of "Saturday Night Live" that had him for its stellar host.

We expected the actor to make only a nominal appearance, but he surprised us by playing four different roles in the episode!

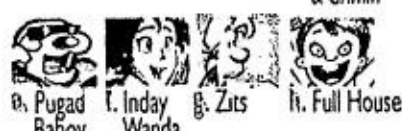
THERE'S LIFE/2

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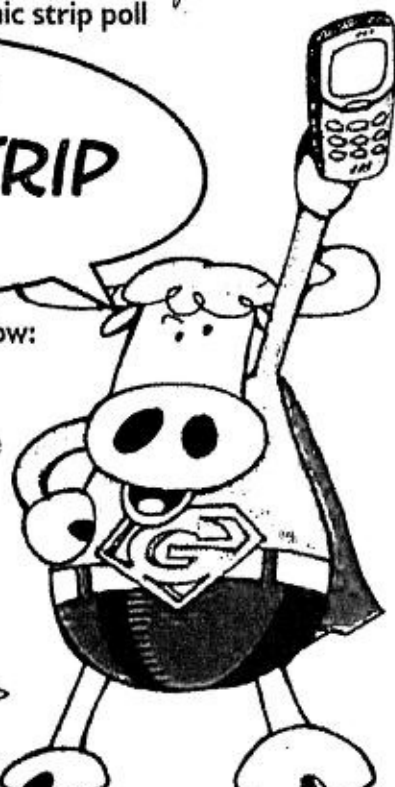


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MTRCB RATING: R13

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BONDING. In one episode alone of "SLN," Brosnan played an old historian, a gay salesman and a German commercial model.

There's life after James Bond

From page 1

He first portrayed himself in an opening skit with a comedian who impersonated Sean Connery. It was amusing to see them bickering over who was the better James Bond!

In a subsequent skit, Brosnan changed his appearance completely to spoof an old historian commenting on World War II.

Later he played a gay boutique salesman criticizing hapless customers for their bad taste. And in another skit featuring Destiny's Child, he donned a long blond wig to portray a German commercial model, complete with thick accent and flamboyant gestures.

Thus did Brosnan prove that he was a truly versatile performer. No wonder, playing only James Bond for years bored him to tears!

'American Pie Wedding'

CINEMAX screens the "American Pie" sequel, "The Wedding," at 9 p.m. on Jan. 30. In the sequel, Jim (Jason Biggs) and Michelle (Alyson Hannigan) are getting married.

Michelle's sexy sister Cadence (January Jones) has flown in to help her sister as maid of honor. Once Stifler (Sean William Scott) and Finch (Eddie Kaye Thomas) catch sight of

her, the war to woo is on.

Further confounding the groom and bride's rush to the altar are an unexpected bachelor party, dancing lessons, a church full of wilted flowers, and some rather personal grooming mishaps.

'Ultimate Cars'

DISCOVERY Channel telecasts "Ultimate Cars" every Thursday at 8 p.m., with repeats on Fridays at 4 a.m. and 12 noon, and on Saturdays at 4 p.m. The new series defines the world's greatest cars.

Vehicles of many styles, shapes and uses are featured, all in the running to drive away as the show's Ultimate Car. The final episode in the 10-week series takes the winners from each category and chooses the winner.

Episodes: Jan. 20, "Adventure Cars": These vehicles changed the way we think about motoring, and the possibilities that the automobile created. Featured in this episode are the Range Rover, Willys Jeep, Hummer H1, Lamborghini LM002, and Porsche Cayenne Turbo.

Jan. 27, "Beauty": These cars feature a combination of proportion and line that is perfect, while being impossible to describe. They are visions that small boys carry with them for

years, until they are old and rich enough to make them real for themselves: the Aston Martin DB5, Jaguar E-Type, Citroen DS, and Ferrari Dino.

Episodes in February: "The People's Champion" (affordable cars), "Racers," "Luxury," "Road Rally," "Convertibles," "Power Cars" and "The Superstars."

Tribute to Pacita Abad

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Jan. 17 marks the 40th day of Abad's passing. Highlights of the tribute are a lecture on Abad and her art by Corazon S. Alvina, director of the National Museum, and an exhibition at the Pardo de Tavera Room of the Rizal Library of select works by the artist, as well as personal correspondence, photographs and other memorabilia.

Elvis Nights

BYKES Cafe and Dance Studio (750-0622) joins the celebration of Elvis Presley's 70th birthday with performances of "Elvis and Friends" every Thursday night this month. Featured are the ESP (Elvis Society of the Philippines) Band, and Boy Sanchez, winner of Discovery Channel's Elvis of the New Millennium search.

Also performing at Bykes Cafe are Men in Gold (Mondays), Rhythm and Blue and Sabor Latino (Tuesdays), The Brothers and Cool Change (Wednesdays), Miami Quarter (Thursdays), Onda Latina and Rhythm and Babes (Fridays), and Beats and Pieces and Batch of '69 (Saturdays).

Elektra sick, resting

LOS ANGELES—Golden Globe nominee Jennifer Garner is sick. "She has a viral infection," publicist Nicole King said Tuesday, adding the "Alias" star isn't hospitalized and is resting at home in Los Angeles.

The 32-year-old actress has been forced to reschedule promotion of her new movie, "Elektra." It was still up in the air whether Garner will appear at Saturday's Las Vegas premiere for the film.

Garner plays an assassin for hire as the resurrected warrior woman in the comic book adaptation "Elektra," a spin-off of her character from 2003's "Daredevil."

She is nominated for a best dramatic actress Golden Globe award for her role in the ABC-TV spy series "Alias" (related story, A3-4).

"Alias" returns for its fourth season with a two-hour special Wednesday. AP

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Acclaimed flutist to perform with MPO



WORLD-CLASS artist Shin

KOREAN flutist Hae Won Shin will perform with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) under the baton of Rodel F. Colmenar as guest soloist in the concert "Experience Paris."

The acclaimed flutist has performed as soloist with world-class orchestras such as the Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra, the Krasnoyarsk Symphony Orchestra and the Moscow Festival Orchestra in Russia, the Korean Symphony Orchestra and the Bulgaria Chamber Orchestra. She was awarded for outstanding solo performance by the Lincoln Center Foundation in New York during the Mozart Bicentennial Festival.

Shin started studying piano at age 6 but was soon drawn to the flute. She won the National Young Artists Competition organized by the Yuck-Young Foundation in Seoul the very next year.

Shin graduated with Master of Arts and Master of Education degrees

from Columbia University. She founded the Manila Woodwind Ensemble that represented the country in the Asia Music Festival.

Today, she is a faculty member teaching flute at St. Scholastica's College.

Shin has performed with her famous professor, the American Julius Baker, in Japan and in Korea. She has also performed in recitals at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center as well as with the Manila Symphony II and the St. Cecilia's Hall Annual Concert.

Shin's concert, "Experience Paris," will be held on Jan. 28, 8 p.m. at the Philamlife Theater on UN Avenue in Manila. The program also includes "Danse Macabre" by Camille Saint-Saens and "L'Arlesienne" by Georges Bizet.

Tickets are available at the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra Office, 705-1728 and 7224274, or Ticketworld, 8919999.

Daughter...

From page 4

Los Angeles child welfare officials removed Frances from Love's care and Cobain's mother, Wendy O'Connor, was named the child's guardian.

The 40-year-old Love said she was thrilled to resume her life with her daughter. Cobain committed suicide in 1994.

Far from over

"Life is about choices and I've chosen to move forward with my life in a healthy and positive way," Love said in a statement. "Having my daughter back with me is exciting. I am looking forward to the future in continuing to entertain and create great music."

But while the return of Frances is good news for Love, her legal woes are far from over.

In November, she pleaded not guilty to attacking a female musician with a whiskey bottle at the home of her ex-boyfriend, Jim Barber—whose window she broke earlier—and is free on \$150,000 bail pending her trial.

Love is also awaiting trial on separate charges of possessing the powerful painkillers oxycodone and hydrocodone at the time of her overdose.

In a third criminal case against her last year, Love pleaded guilty in July to being under the influence of drugs while outside Barber's home and was sentenced to a drug rehabilitation program.

AFP

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3	KUNG FU HUSTLE 11:00, 1:25, 3:50 6:15, 8:40, 11:00 PG-13
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KUNG FU HUSTLE PG13 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:05	OCEAN'S TWELVE PG13 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50	OCEAN'S TWELVE PG13 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

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2 KUNG FU HUSTLE FS 12:20PM, 2:45PM, 5:10PM, 7:35PM, LMF 10:00PM (PG-13)	4 RAISE YOUR VOICE FS 11:40AM, 2:00PM, 4:20PM, 6:40PM, LMF 9:00PM (GP)

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2 BLADE TRINITY 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	7 PANAGHOY SA SUBA 11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
3 IN SEARCH OF THE IMPOTENT MAN 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00	8 FIRST DAUGHTER 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 NATIONAL TREASURE 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00	9 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	10 RAISE YOUR VOICE 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

ERMITA

536-7809 to 12

1 BLADE TRINITY 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	
2 RAISE YOUR VOICE 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	5 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:45 1:30 4:15 7:00 9:45
3 OCEAN'S TWELVE 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	6 RESERVE
4 IN SEARCH OF AN IMPOTENT MAN 10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45	7 KUNG FU HUSTLE 10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45

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2 NATIONAL TREASURE 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	6 OCEAN'S TWELVE 12:05 2:45 5:25 8:05
3 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER 12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9:00	7 KUNG FU HUSTLE 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
4 SIGAW 11:00 1:05 3:10 5:15 7:20 9:30	8 BLADE TRINITY 11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30

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1 OCEAN'S TWELVE 11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25	5 KUNG FU HUSTLE 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:40 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30	6 BLADE TRINITY 10:20 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25
3 SIGAW 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30	7 ENTENG KABISOTE 12:45 3:15 5:45 8:25
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MARTY'S MOMENT. Scorsese (right) with his "Aviator" star DiCaprio (left)



KIEFER Sutherland, 2002 winner for "24"



"DESPERATE" HOURS. Teri Hatcher (left) and Nicolette Sheridan are nominated for Best Actress in TV Series for "Desperate Housewives."

Hollywood takes Golden Globes seriously!

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood types say the Golden Globes are the Hollywood awards equivalent of that phrase "famous for being famous," applied to celebrities who don't have to do anything but be there.

It's not clear how a small group of foreign entertainment reporters managed to create and maintain a ceremony second only to the Academy Awards in prominence among Hollywood film honors.

Yet the all-star lineup at Sunday's 62nd annual Golden Globes today will attest to the fact that Tinseltown takes this show seriously.

Though chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, a group of only about 90 people, the Globes have conspicuous air time on NBC and exert influence on the Oscar race. Globe nominations are the first significant film honors in the awards season, and the out-

come can help solidify a front-runner's Oscar prospects or elevate a dark horse's chances.

Like an election

"You never know. That's the exciting part about watching the Golden Globes and Oscars," said Leonardo DiCaprio, a Golden Globe nominee and likely Oscar contender for Best Actor for the Howard Hughes biopic, "The Aviator."

"Even if a person looks like a lock on winning an award, the Golden Globes and Oscars could be completely different. It's like watching an election."

Other key acting nominees include Jamie Foxx as singer Ray Charles in "Ray"; Annette Bening as a slyly vengeful stage diva in "Being Julia"; Johnny Depp as "Peter Pan" playwright J.M. Barrie in "Finding Neverland";

How does a small group of foreign writers maintain a ceremony second only to the Oscars?

and Hilary Swank and Morgan Freeman for the boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby."

Along with movie awards, the Globes present honors for TV achievement.

The Globes fell on hard times in the early 1980s, when Pia Zadora won an award for her bomb "Butterfly" amid allegations that Globe voters had been entertained at a Las Vegas hotel owned by the actress' husband.

Charges that Globe voters were swayed by gifts and favors turned the awards into a Hollywood joke, and TV networks dropped the show, which ran on cable channels for several years. Globe organizers worked hard to clean up their act, and the ceremony was welcomed back to network TV in 1996.

Critics still look down on the Globes, but Lorenzo Soria, the press association's president, attributed such criticism to sour grapes over the status the Golden Globes have achieved.

"We take seriously our duty as journalists and spend an inordinate amount of our lives watching movies and watching TV shows," Soria said. "Sometimes I think maybe there is a little bit of jealousy for the success we have had. We're proud of our achievement, and we're accustomed that, once in a while, somebody is going to say something nasty about us. We don't pay any attention to it."

Fairly accurate

Along with other film honors, the Globes call attention to smaller performances that otherwise might have been overlooked come Oscar time. They also serve as a fairly accurate forecast for how the Oscars will play out.

Five years ago, Swank's Golden Globe win for "Boys Don't Cry" gave her a boost that helped her take home the Best Actress Oscar over front-runner Annette Bening, nominated for "American Beauty."

Last year, the Academy Award recipients in all four acting categories—Sean Penn, Charlize Theron, Tim Robbins and Renee Zellweger—won Golden Globes on the way to their Oscar wins.

Unlike other film honors, the Globes recognize two Best Picture categories, drama and musical or comedy, turning attention to lighter movies likely to go unnoticed at the Oscars, which favor more serious stories.

The dual categories also give the Globes better odds at predicting the eventual Oscar champ. In nine of the last 10 years, the Oscar Best Picture victor also won the Globe for either drama or musical or comedy.

The Globe ceremony also is a place for stars to cut loose a bit. The show has a history of spontaneity that sets it apart from the Oscars or other more reserved awards shows.

One year, Globe winner Ving Rhames called fellow nominee Jack Lemmon onstage and handed him his trophy for Best Actor in a TV miniseries or movie. Both Christine Lahti, a winner for "Chicago Hope," and Renee Zellweger, a recipient for "Nurse Betty," were in

the restroom when their names were announced as Globe winners.

Top contenders

"The Aviator," directed by Martin Scorsese, looks set to soar to victory in today's rites. It is strongly tipped by pundits to snatch the Best Drama award, while the bittersweet road movie "Sideways" is expected to steal the Best Comedy or Musical trophy.

"This is Marty Scorsese's year," said Tinseltown author and awards expert Tom O'Neil. "The Aviator" is a slam-dunk to win Best Drama. It has all the elements: It's doing very well at the box office, Scorsese has long been overlooked by major awards and it stars an A-list actor—Leonardo DiCaprio."

The big-budget blockbuster epic also starring Cate Blanchett, Kate Winslet, Alec Baldwin and Jude Law, comes to the Globes armed with six nominations, including Best Director for Scorsese.

But sharing the glory with Scorsese will be director Alexander Payne, for the wry "Sideways," according to O'Neil and his colleagues at website Goldderby.com.

"Sideways," which follows two old friends on a wine-tasting tour through the vineyards of California, leads the competition with seven nominations, including Best Director for Payne.

Also in the race for the Best Drama statuette are director Clint Eastwood's female boxing movie "Million Dollar Baby," "Finding Neverland" starring Johnny Depp and Kate Winslet, "Hotel Rwanda," "Kinsey" starring Liam Neeson and "Closer," Mike Nichols' story of a love quadrangle.

In the best comedy or musical category, "Sideways" is competing with the animated superhero film "The Incredibles," the Ray Charles story "Ray," psychological comedy "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Phantom of the Opera."

Scorsese's main competitor for Best Director is former movie tough-guy Eastwood, Payne for "Sideways," Marc Forster for "Finding Neverland" and Nichols for "Closer."

Some dark horses

Spanish actor Javier Bardem is a favorite to snatch the Globe for Best Actor in a Drama for his wrenching role as a paraplegic battling to end his life in "The Sea Inside," but he faces serious competition from DiCaprio and Depp, who plays Peter Pan author J.M. Barrie, experts said.

They face off Don Cheadle in the genocide story "Hotel Rwanda" and Neeson as 1950s sexologist Alfred Kinsey, who helped launch the sexual revolution.

Jamie Foxx is a shoo-in for Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy for his performance as the "Genius of Soul" in "Ray," pundits said.

"Anything else would be a shock," said Dave Karger of Entertainment Weekly, as Foxx's performance stirs Oscar whispers. AP, AFP

Daughter with Love again

LOS ANGELES—Troubled diva Courtney Love has won back custody of her 12-year-old daughter, 15 months after the singer-actress' arrest on drugs charges, Love's lawyer said Friday.

Frances Bean went home to her mother after a judge on Monday ruled that Love was making progress in emerging from more than a year of woes, her attorney, Howard Weitzman said.

"Courtney Love's daughter, Frances, has been returned to her after a judge indicated satisfaction in Ms Love's efforts to turn her life around and found it was in the best interests of mother and daughter to be reunited," Weitzman said.

Love lost custody of Frances, whose father was the late Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain, on Oct. 2, 2003, following the singer's arrest after breaking a window at her ex-boyfriend's home and overdosing on painkillers.



DAUGHTER/3 COURTNEY and daughter Frances Bean



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